

ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.



VOL. I

LONDON :

PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.



ANDREW JACKSON

President of the United States

ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.

FROM THE

SKETCH-BOOK OF A GERMAN NOBLEMAN.

EDITED BY

FRANCIS J. GRUND.

AUTHOR OF "THE AMERICANS IN THEIR MORAL, SOCIAL,
AND POLITICAL RELATIONS."

"Why should the poor be flatter'd?
No: let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning."

SHAKESPEARE'S *Hamlet*, Act iii. Scene 2.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1839.

E165
G74

v.1

Gift of
Charles A. Kofoid

TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I DEDICATE to you the following pages, written by one of your fellow-citizens, who, though a European by birth, is firmly and devotedly attached to his adopted country.

If their contents should in any way offend you,—if the serious or ironical arguments contained in them should meet with your displeasure,—I entreat you to consider the purity of the Author's intention, who, even where he employs personal satire, wishes but to expose error for the purpose of reform, not of ridicule.

Neither must you look upon them as containing aught against the laws and institutions of your country. Not those glorious monuments of the virtue and wisdom of your fathers, but the men who would turn them to

vicious and selfish purposes are justly upheld to derision.

A people like yourselves, great, powerful, and magnanimous, is as much beyond the reach of personal satire as it is proof against the weapons of its foes: not so the men who, claiming for themselves a specific distinction, cannot properly be considered as identified with your principles and character.

Against these then, and against these alone, is the following work—of which I am but the Editor—directed, in the hope of thereby rendering a service to the Public, which, both in the capacity of a writer and a citizen of the United States, I readily acknowledge as my Lord and Sovereign. What other object, indeed, could he have, whose wishes, hopes, and expectations are identified with your own, and who considers no earthly honour equal to that of being

Your humblest servant and

Fellow-citizen,

FRANCIS J. GRUND.

London, May 10th, 1839.

P R E F A C E.

I HEREWITH submit to the British Public a work principally intended for the benefit of the American. Both people, however, are so intimately connected by the ties of friendship and consanguinity, and so many errors and faults of the Americans — as, indeed, most of their virtues — are so clearly and distinctly to be traced to their British origin, that the perusal of the following pages may, perhaps, be not altogether uninteresting to the readers of both countries.

As individuals may study their own character by carefully examining and observing that of their fellow-creatures,—for it is only in comparing ourselves with others that we become acquainted with ourselves,—so may a correct knowledge of one nation, and the tendencies of its institutions, enable another to

form a proper estimate of itself, and to set a right value on its own laws and government.

Such is the object of the following publication; the Public must decide whether it has been attained.

THE EDITOR.

London, May 10th, 1839.

CONTENTS
OF
THE FIRST VOLUME.

PART I.

CONTAINING THE ADVENTURES OF A DAY SPENT AMONG
THE BLOODS IN NEW YORK.

Introduction.—Character of the Author. Page 3

CHAPTER I.

Walk to the Battery.—The Breakfast.—Conversation of
young travelled Americans.—Their Notions of Politics,
Negroes, and Women. 16

CHAPTER II.

Return to the City.—Arrival of the London Packet.—
Reception of the Passengers.—American Speculations on
an English Lord.—Introduction to a Fashionable Board-
ing-house.—A New England Minerva.—A Belle.—A Lady
from Virginia.—Conduct of Fashionable Young Ladies
towards Gentlemen of an inferior Standing.—Confusion
produced by the Dinner-bell. 49

CHAPTER III.

The Dinner.—Reflections on the Homage paid to American Women.—Observation of a Fashionable Young Lady on American eating.—The Party after Dinner.—An American descanting on the Fashions.—Parallel between English and American Women.—Manner of rising in Society.—Extravagance and Waste of the Middle Classes.—Toad-eating of Fashionable Americans in Europe.—Their Contempt for the Liberal Institutions of their Country.—Manner in which the Society of America may be used as a Means of correcting the Notions of European Exaltados.—The British Constitution in high favour with the Upper Classes.—Southern and Northern Aristocracy contrasted.—Aristocracy of Literati.—American Women in Society and at Home.—Pushing in Society the Cause of Failures.—Western Aristocracy.—An Aristocratic Lady in Pittsburgh.—Aristocracy in a Printer's Shop.—Philosophical Windings-up of the Party. . . . Page 84

CHAPTER IV.

Joining the Ladies.—Education of a Fashionable Young Lady in New York—her Accomplishments.—Tea without Gentlemen.—Commercial Disasters not affecting the Routine of Amusements in the City of New York.—The Theatre.—Forest come back to America.—Opinions of the Americans on Shakspeare and the Drama.—Their Estimation of Forest as an Actor.—Forest and Rice contrasted. . . . 155

CHAPTER V.

Description of an American Rout.—A Flirtation.—The Floor kept by the same Set of Dancers.—Fashionable Characters.—An Unfortunate Girl at a Party.—Inquiry

instituted in her Behalf.—Anecdote of two Fashionable young Ladies at Nahant.—Aristocratic Feelings of the Americans carried abroad.—Anecdotes.—Reflections on the Manners of the Higher Classes.—Anecdotes illustrative of Western Politeness and Hospitality.—Kentucky Hospitality.—Hypocrisy of the Higher Orders of Americans — Aristocracy in Churches.—An American Aristocrat compared to Shylock.—A Millionnaire.—Two Professional Men.—Stephen Girard —A Gentleman of Norman Extraction.—Different Methods resorted to for procuring Ancestors.—Americans and the English contrasted.—A Country Representative—Method of making him desert his Principles.—Political Synonyms.—Contempt for Democracy.—Expectations of the American Aristocracy.—Objections to Waltzing.—Announcement of Supper. Page 190

CHAPTER VI.

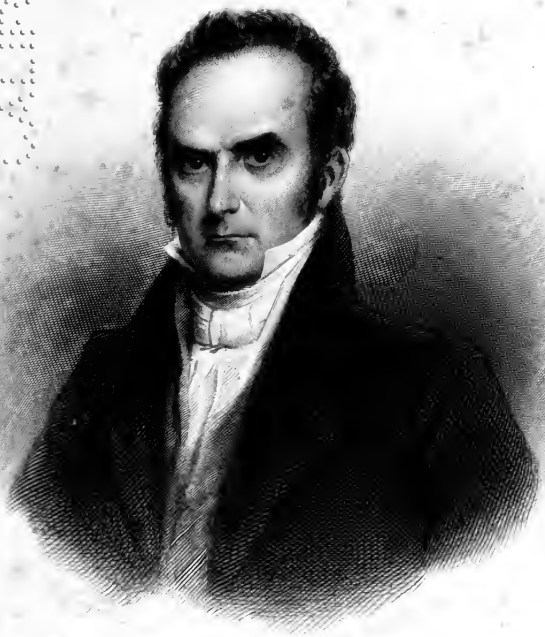
A German Dissertation on Eating.—Application of Eating to Scientific, Moral, and Political Purposes.—Democrats in America not in the Habit of entertaining People.—Consequences of this Mistake.—The Supper.—Dialogue between a Country Representative and a Fashionable Lady.—Mode of winning Country Members.—Hatred of the Higher Classes of everything belonging to Democracy.—Attachment of the Old Families to England.—Hatred of the "Vulgar English."—The French, and even the English, not sufficiently aristocratic for the Americans.—Generosity of the Americans toward England.—A Fashionable Young Lady.—An American Exquisite.—Middle-aged Gentlemen and Ladies.—Americans not understanding how to amuse themselves, because they do not know how to laugh.—Negroes the happiest People in the United States.—Breaking-up of the Party.—Gallantry of the Gentlemen. 228

CHAPTER VII.

Late Hours kept in New York.—The Oyster-shops of New York compared to those of Philadelphia.—Important Schism on that Subject.—The Café de l'Indépendance.—A French Character.—Description of a Fashionable Oyster-shop.—A sensible American just returned from Paris.—His account of American Aristocracy abroad.—Mr. L* * * and Mr. Thistle.—A shrewd Yankee Tailor in Paris.—His Advice to his Countrymen.—An American Senator scorning to become the fee'd Advocate of the Mob, after the manner of O'Connell. . . . Page 277

CHAPTER VIII.

Return Home.—A Passage from the Edinburgh Review, apologetical of American Federalism.—Speculation on the Subject.—Little Reward of Democracy in the United States.—The Higher Classes contending for the Purse—Consequence of this Policy.—Declaration of an American Reviewer with regard to American Poets.—Their Reward in Europe.—Falling asleep.—The Nightmare. . . . 306



DANIEL WEBSTER.

ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.

PART I.

CONTAINING THE ADVENTURES OF A DAY SPENT
AMONG THE BLOODS IN NEW YORK.



INTRODUCTION.

CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR.

THE following sketches of “American Aristocracy” were written in a desultory manner during a journey the Author took some time ago from Boston to Washington, after having sojourned a number of years in the country.

The Author, now *residing in New York*, not having sufficient courage to publish them, I undertook that task for him; not with a view to pecuniary profit, but in order to render a service to truth, which ought to be acceptable at all times, and cannot but benefit a young, aspiring, prosperous country like the United States.

Numerous works have already been published on “American Society;” but its peculiar tendency towards *Aristocracy*, its talents, re-

sources, and prospects, have never been more than generally and superficially dwelt upon, even by the best writers. This is a great fault. The Americans have, as they repeatedly assure Europeans, “a great deal of Aristocracy,” and, in general, a very nice taste for artificial distinctions; a circumstance which, as yet, is but little known to the great bulk of the European public, who still imagine them to be a set of savages.

The Author of these pages seems to have made it his study to bring those hidden gems to light, in order to vindicate his adopted country from the reproach of *equality* and *barbarism*, indiscriminately heaped upon it by the Tories of all countries, and especially by the *great* Tories of England.

Before entering on the task assigned me, it is, however, necessary first to acquaint the reader with the personage of the Author, who was once a sporting character; but is now a sedate, moral, religious man, scarcely to be told from a real American. Although of noble extraction, being the seventh son of

the Westphalian Baron Von K—pfsch—rtz, whose family dates back to the eighth century, he has, while in the United States, sunk the nobleman in the man of business; in consequence of which he now passes generally for “a sensible man.” Had he been *born* and *bred* in America, and inherited or acquired a large fortune, his being descended from a noble family might have added to his other accomplishments; but the pedigree of a poor German nobleman without a rent-roll could not possibly do him any good, and might have done him much harm in raising the jealousy of his employers.

For a time he devoted himself to politics, in which he was a great enthusiast, but soon discovered his error; and, finding winds and waves more steady than the favours of the public, became supercargo of an American East Indiaman. He stayed three years in Canton, and on his return married the daughter of the president of an insurance office—the young lady having fallen in love with him at a party, —notwithstanding the remonstrances of the

family, who considered the match a poor one. He has since had two children by his wife, and a clerkship by his father-in-law ; all which, taken together, has done much to attach him to the country, and will, I doubt not, in due time make him “ a patriot.”

I must yet observe that the following “ sketches” were written during the Author’s political career, and shortly after ; it being agreed between him and his father-in-law, at the time of his marriage, that he should never again use a pen except for the benefit of the office, or to write a letter to his *beau-père*, provided he be willing to frank it. This promise I understood him to have religiously kept, as indeed every other he made at that time ; but, feeling all the while some lurking desire to see himself in print, he thought it no harm to touch up an *old* manuscript, which he was determined secretly to put into my hands, in order that I might select from it what I judged fit for publication. The way in which he accomplished his design, and the charge he gave me, are important items ; which, as they are brief, I shall not withhold from the public.

It was in the month of August last year, that, early in the morning of a sultry day, while sauntering along the wide and dirty streets of New York, I was, just at the corner of Chamber Street and Broadway, struck by the singular appearance of a male figure, which I at once recognised as European, though the individual in question had apparently taken the most studied pains to disguise his origin. His stature was straight and erect; his neck, already thin and stiff, was, by the aid of a black cravat, reduced to a still narrower compass; and his hat was sunk down his neck so as to expose half his forehead. His frock-coat, despite the heat of the day, was buttoned up to the chin, and yet of such diminutive dimensions as scarcely to cover any one part of his body. His trowsers were of the same tight fit as his coat, and the heels of his boots added at least an inch and a half to his natural height. His steps were short and quick, deviating neither to the right nor left from a straight line; and his head, which was thrown back, seemed to act as a rudder in directing

his motion. Thus far, his appearance differed in nothing from a genuine New-Yorker, except that his shoulders were very much broader, and his legs much more stout, than one generally meets with on the borders of the Atlantic.

I seldom saw an European imitate exactly the particular business-dress and gait of an American; and in this instance the copy appeared to me so burlesque, that I felt curious to see the full face of a man whose body bore such evident imprints of two worlds. I therefore stepped quickly forward a few paces, and, leaning against the window of a print-shop, endeavoured to take a front view of my hero. He seemed to guess my intention, and, desirous of avoiding observation, turned his head towards the opposite side; which, however, did not prevent me from recognising at once my friend *the Author*, with a large roll of paper in his hand.

“Ah!” exclaimed he, grasping my arm, “I am glad to meet you,—the very man I wanted to see. Whither are you now going?”

“To breakfast.”

“ Are you invited ? ”

“ Not that I know of.”

“ Then I shall accompany you. I have to speak to you on a very important subject.”

“ I am going to the Turkish divan.”

“ The very place I like,—it ’s private, snug, genteel ; one can be there without meeting a reporter.”

It was now seven o’clock. The sun had risen over an infinite canopy of dense vapours, through which his rays of burning light were dissolved into a dark lurid hue which hung like smoke on the red walls of the buildings. The thermometer stood 98° in the shade. After a short walk, which, owing to the excessive sultriness of the air, proved sufficiently fatiguing, we arrived at the coffee-house. The *entrée* was somewhat *dérobée*, for the evident purpose of concealing it from the eyes of the vulgar ; and the establishment being on the second floor, and the staircase dark and narrow, none but one initiated into the secret could have found the way to it. We ascended the stairs, opened the folding-doors, and in

another moment found ourselves in an elegant apartment, studded with marble tables and stuffed couches, in which a sort of *chiaro-oscuro*—the window-shutters being but half opened, and the windows concealed by a rich damask drapery, — gave full effect to the numerous oil-paintings that covered the walls. Some of these, we were told by the waiter, were of high value, being “*genuine originals* ;” but my friend, who passed for a connoisseur in these matters, merely tossed up his head, and said he knew all about them.

“Have you seen the *invoice*?” demanded the waiter.

“It’s no matter,” replied my friend ; “you had better give us some coffee.”

We stretched ourselves each on an ottoman (chairs being entirely banished from the establishment), and “the Author” at once came to the point.

“I wanted to hand you my sketch-book,” said he, after heaving a deep sigh, “containing the journal of a tour through the principal Atlantic cities, and a few memorandums of my stay in Washington.”

“ Ah ! have you finally resolved to publish it ? ”

“ Not I. I am a married man, related to one of the most aristocratic families in town, with the prospect of inheriting a fortune. I must not quarrel with my bread and butter.”

“ Oh ! I understand you : you wish me to publish it for you ; that’s more than I can promise to do without seeing the manuscript.”

“ But you may omit what you do not like, or soften down what is likely to give offence.”

“ That you know is useless. The Americans do not like to be spoken of in any way. They are so thin-skinned as not even to bear *praise* ; they take it for irony.”

“ I know it. Our first people are like the Venetian senators, who would not allow the government to be *praised* ; because, if one man bestowed praise, another might be guilty of censure. There is no knowing where matters will end when once in the mouth of the people.”

“ All this ought to put me the more on my guard : yet, out of friendship for you, I will

make myself a martyr. If *you* had the courage to *write* the truth, *I* will have the boldness to *publish* it."

"Bravó!" cried my friend, embracing me in a Continental manner, "I see you are a real German; and, if ever I inherit ——"

"Pray don't mention it. It will be as much as you can do to pay your wife's mantua-maker. You cannot count your father-in-law's money until after his death. There are bank liabilities, insurance liabilities, and Heaven knows what other mercantile and private liabilities! Just give me the manuscript, and trust the rest to my affection."

"You are too kind—too generous!" cried he; "but I must, nevertheless, give you a few hints. I think you had better omit the account of my *flirtations* entirely. It is not in good taste. All such things are necessarily insipid; and, if Mrs. K—pfsch—rtz should by accident learn ——"

"She would never forgive you."

"It is not *that* I am most afraid of; but my father-in-law, and the public —— Besides,

my flirtations, as is always the case in the United States, ended in a most *sensible* manner, and on that account are not likely to interest an European reader. The first lady sent me word by her servant not to trouble myself with writing her any more letters, as she was determined to send them back unopened. The second gave me a verbal warning in these terms:—‘I am sorry you should be in love with me, because papa and mamma think it all nonsense; I do not say this to hurt your feelings, but merely to prevent you from taking any unnecessary steps in the matter. I shall, nevertheless, be always happy to see you as a *friend*.’ And the third ended in the most legitimate manner,—in my marriage. I think my sketches of fashionable parties, and in general of the character and principles of our ‘first society,’ are much more likely to give satisfaction: only soften them down a little for the sake of Judge Lynch: it would break my heart to see you tarred and feathered. As regards my account of American statesmen and politicians, you

must calculate your chances of a duel. A Southerner will fight three times as quick as a Northerner; but the Northerner will never forgive you. Be careful how you repeat what I have said about *parsons*; they have more power in the United States than in any other country. They have the power of breaking any man they please; for they possess the most complete control over the women. I have, in this respect, always been of Jean Paul Richter's opinion, who despised 'the *pater-noster globule* of piety,' as much as 'the empty bubbles of worldly prudence.' But you know my religious sentiments, and are best able to judge whether I deserve the name of a Christian. If I have sometimes been severe upon Unitarianism and Dr. Channing, it is because I hate cant in any shape, and would oppose any man that would constitute himself moral pope of the community. The Bostonians, who, according to their own confession, are a 'people full of notions,' are always ready to deify a man that 'captivates their fancy;' and accordingly have within the

narrow confines of their city a whole Olympus of gods and goddesses, of which the reverend Socinian is the *Jupiter tonans*. But you will best know how to manage these matters: only one thing,—forgive the vanity of an author!—you must promise me as a *conditio sine quâ non*.”

“ And what is that ? ”

“ Not to make such a thing of it as Fanny Kemble’s journal ;—that is, not to strike out three-fourths of the book, and then publish the rest all dashes and stars.”

I gave him my word to leave as few stories untold as possible, and, in general, to stick to my text as far as was consistent with prudence ; after which he quietly sneaked off to his office, leaving me to do the best with the manuscript. And now, gentle reader, it is for you to judge whether I have abused the confidence of my friend.

CHAPTER I.

Walk to the Battery.—The Breakfast.—Conversation of young travelled Americans.—Their notions of Politics, Negroes, and Women.

“ He cannot be a perfect man,
Not being try’d and tutor’d in the world :
Experience is by industry achiev’d,
And perfected by the swift course of time.”

SHAKSPEARE.—*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act I. Scene 3.

SOME years ago, early of a fine morning in the month of July, I was sauntering with some Southern friends down Broadway towards the Battery, which forms the eastern extremity of the city of New York. The night had been most uncomfortably hot, the thermometer ranging above 90°, and the sun’s lurid glare, produced by a thick heavy mist,—the usual companion of a sultry day in Ame-

rica,—gave to the sleeping city the appearance of a general conflagration.

As long as we were in Broadway, not a breath of air was stirring, and respiration really difficult ; but, when we arrived at the Bowling Green, a delicious sea-breeze imparted new vigour to our exhausted frames, and increased gradually as we were approaching the Battery. Arrived at this beautiful spot, the air was quite refreshing, and the view one of the finest I ever beheld. The harbour was covered with sails, a rich verdure overspread the neighbouring hills and islands, and the mingled waters of the ocean and the Hudson, gently rippled by the breeze, tremblingly reflected the burning orb of day.

“ What a delicious spot this is ! ” said I ;
“ there is nothing equal to it in any part of the Union ! ”

“ Certainly not,” said one of my companions, who had stopped to survey the beauty of the landscape ; “ yet how many Americans do you think enjoy it ? ”

“ It is certainly not a very fashionable place,” said I.

“How could it be?” replied he: “all the fashionable people have moved to the West-end of the town.”

“Where the atmosphere is not half so pure, the breeze not a quarter so refreshing as here; and where, instead of this glorious harbour,—this ocean, the emblem of eternity,—they see nothing but sand,—a barren desert, interspersed here and there by a block of brick buildings,” added the other.

“This our people imagine to be a successful imitation of English taste,” observed the first. “They forget that the West-end of London contains magnificent squares and public walks; and that it is in the immediate neighbourhood of the Parks.”

“And yet,” said the other, “if to-morrow the Southwark and all the boroughs east of the Thames were to get into fashion, our New York aristocracy would imitate the example, and inhabit once more this beautiful site.”

“It is true,” resumed I, “*this* imitation of the English is not a very happy one; and deserves the more to be ridiculed, as it refers

merely to forms, and not to the substance of things. I am in a habit of taking a stroll here every evening; but have not, for the space of two months, met with a single individual known in the higher circles. Foreigners are the only persons who enjoy this spot."

"And do you know why?" interrupted one of my friends: "it is because our fashionable Americans do not wish to be seen with the people; they dread that more than the tempest; and it is for this reason all that is really beautiful in the United States is considered *vulgar*. The people follow their inclination, and occupy that which they like; while our exclusives are obliged to content themselves with what is abandoned by the crowd."

"I am not very sorry for that," said the second; "our exclusives deserve no better fate. As long as the aristocracy of a country is willing to associate with the educated classes of the *bourgeoisie*, they set a premium on talent and the example of good breeding. This aristocracy here is itself nothing but a wealthy overgrown *bourgeoisie*, composed of a few

families who have been more successful in trade than the rest, and on that account are now cutting their friends and relations in order to be considered fashionable."

Here we heard the ringing of the bell for the departure of the hourly steam-boat for Staten Island. As we intended to join a small party to breakfast at "the Pavilion," we quickly hurried on board, and in less than a minute were floating on the water. A fine brass band was stationed on deck, and the company consisted of a great number of pretty women with their attendant swains, who thus early escaped from the heat of the city in order to return to it at shopping-time,—from twelve till two o'clock. A few lonely "females," only protected by huge baskets filled with provisions, had also come "to enjoy the concord of sweet sounds," and a trip down the harbour for a quarter of a dollar, previous to returning home from the market. The whole company were in excellent spirits, the basket-ladies being arranged on one side,—unfortunately, however, to windward,—and the ladies and gentlemen on

the other, the band playing involuntary variations to the tune of "Auld lang syne."

In precisely an hour from the time we had left the wharf we landed on Staten Island, and proceeded at once to the place of *rendezvous*. This was a large public-house fitted up in a most magnificent style by Colonel M***, late keeper of the A*** Hotel, one of the few landlords possessed of the talent of making people comfortable. The building was very spacious; but its wings were a little too long, and the small garden in front almost entirely destitute of trees,—a fault from which no public, and hardly any private, mansion in the United States, can be said to be entirely exempted.

The Americans have, indeed, a singular aversion to trees and shrubs of every description: their highest idea of perfection in a landscape being an extended plain sown with grass. They consider trees as a mark of barbarism, and are, in their zeal for civilization, extirpating them wherever they find them. The hills and islands in the harbour of Boston, which were once studded with the majestic

pine and the gnarled oak, are now completely shorn : the city of Albany, built on a gentle declivity once covered with variegated wood, is daily becoming more and more flat and less shady ; the fashionable inhabitants paying more for levelling the ground, and felling the trees, than for the erection of their dwellings. The beautiful trees on the shores of the Monongahila and the Ohio are, at an enormous expense, destroyed root and branch, to give the inhabitants of Pittsburgh the benefit of light and air ; and even the “ old liberty tree ” of Boston, with all its historical associations and recollections, stands no more. How singularly this taste of the Americans contrasts with that of the English, who, after burning and sacking the colony of New Jersey, placed a sentinel near the tree under which William Penn had concluded the treaty with the Indians !

The fault of the garden apart, the Pavilion of Staten Island, or “ the Brighton Pavilion,” as it is sometimes called, offers really a fine and healthy retreat from the noise and dirt of New York ; and this the more so, as, from its

elevation, it is accessible on all sides to the sea-breeze. We ascended a few steps, and found ourselves at once in a capacious bar-room, fitted up in the best American style. Labels of all sorts, and in all languages, stuck on innumerable bottles placed at small distances from one another, and interlined with lemons and oranges, whose bright and pale gold was again relieved by the dark-green hock, and the silver-headed champaign bathed in ice. By the side of these stood the grave and manly Carolina madeira, the fiery sherry, and the sombre port. For the lovers of condensation there were also old French cognac, Irish and Scotch whisky, and an ominous-looking bottle, whose contents portended to be the original beverage of Van Tromp. The favourite drink, however, seemed to be mint-julep; for a huge mass of ice and a forest of mint, together with two large bottles of French and peach brandy, gave, alas! but too positive proofs of the incapability of the landlord to maintain the balance of power among spirits so different in action and principle.

The bar was thronged, even at this early hour, with young men from sixteen to twenty-four years of age, for whom the busy bar-keeper was preparing ice-punch, mint-juleps, port and madeira *sangarie*, apple-toddy, ginsling, &c. with a celerity of motion of which I had heretofore scarcely seen an example. This man evidently understood the value of time, and was fast rising into respectability ; for he was making money more quickly than the “smartest” broker in Wall Street.

“Mr. S*** and Mr. P***?” said he, as he saw us enter ; and, on being answered in the affirmative, touched a bell, which was instantly answered by a servant. “Show these gentlemen to No. 3.”

We were led into a large room, in which from fifteen to twenty persons might have been assembled, exciting their appetite for breakfast by drinking juleps.

“I present you a new friend,” said one of my companions. “I hope you will be gratified with making his acquaintance. Monsieur de *** from Germany.”

Hereupon all the gentlemen rose, one by one, and shook hands with me ; each of them saying, “ How d’ye do ? Very glad to see you.” At last one of them, by way of entering into conversation, told me that he was exceedingly glad to meet with a gentleman from that country. “ I have myself,” said he, “ passed a long time in Germany.”

“ What part of Germany ?” demanded I.

“ Oh, no particular part,” replied he ; “ only principally up and down the Rhine. Capital country that !—excellent hock !—fine historical associations !—excellent people the Germans !”

“ I am very glad you liked them,” said I.

“ Yes, indeed, I always did. What noble castles those ! How do you call that beautiful ancient castle opposite Coblenz ? Erin-bright-in-steen ?”

“ You mean Ehrenbreitenstein,” said I ; “ that is a Prussian fortress.”

“ No matter what you call it,” said he, “ it is a splendid specimen of architecture. I wish we had something like it in this country.”

“ I really do not see the use of it,” said I.

“But I do,” said he; “we want a little chivalry of that sort,—our people are altogether too prosaic.”

“They are too much occupied with politics,” observed another gentleman.

“Altogether too much, sir,” repeated the admirer of Germany.

“But they say it is all for their own good; it improves their condition.”

“I don’t want to know their condition. Heaven save me from politics!”

“It is certainly not a flourishing trade in this country,” said I.

“Not only that, sir; but it is not a respectable one.”

“And why not?”

“Because every blackguard meddles with it.”

“But not every blackguard is successful in it.”

“Quite the reverse; it is only the blackguard who is successful.”

“That’s an old one,” cried an elderly-looking gentleman.

“But who will talk politics on a hot day without taking a julep? Hollo, John! a dozen fresh juleps, with plenty of ice,—and rather stiff, mind ye.”

“It’s no use to talk politics to us, sir,” observed a Mr. * * * of Baltimore, addressing me in a calm, tranquil voice, which had something of the tone of advice and condescension in it; “we are no longer green.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I mean precisely what I say,” replied he. “We have all more or less passed the age in which respectable Americans take an interest in politics; and are, thank God! not yet sufficiently old and decrepit to recur to it once more because we are unfit for everything else.”

“Yes, yes!” interrupted a highly respectable gentleman, whom I had known in Boston, and who had a high reputation for being fond of cards; “a man never takes to politics in this country unless he is ruined in business. I have seen a hundred instances of it in my own city. Let a man have a falling-out with work, and he is sure to turn patriot.”

“Because patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel, as Johnson said,” remarked a young barrister, visibly contented with having had an opportunity of exhibiting his erudition.

“Happy country this!” observed one of my companions, “in which every scoundrel turns patriot!”

“Say, rather, in which every patriot is a scoundrel,” rejoined the lawyer.

“Why, Tom!” exclaimed the Bostonian, “you have broken out in a new place!”

“Why, a man will say a good thing now and then,” replied the professional man. “But where the d—l is that nigger with the juleps? I’ll be hanged if a person can get waited upon in New York without bribing the servants!”

Here the waiter entered.

“What have you been about, sirrah? It’s more than a quarter of an hour since that gentleman” (pointing to the Baltimorian) “asked for some juleps. Can’t you move quicker?”

“I goin’ as fast as I kin,” grinned the negro; “but dere are too many gem’men at de bar.”

“I find,” observed a grave-looking New-Yorker, who until now had not opened his mouth, except for the purpose of admitting the julep, “that our black servants are getting worse and worse every day ever since that bigoted scoundrel T * * * has commenced preaching abolition. Those black devils have always been a nuisance; but now ‘a respectable white man’ can hardly walk up and down Broadway of a Sunday afternoon without being jostled off the side-walk by one of their desperate gangs.”

“And it is still worse in Philadelphia,” observed Major * * *, “owing to the philanthropy of our quakers. One of those black beasts, not more than a week ago, actually eyed my sister through a quizzing-glass as she was walking in Chestnut-street, accompanied by her younger sister.”

“Good God!” cried the New-Yorker, “has it come to this? Must our respectable females be insulted in the streets by a set of dastardly slaves!”

“I can hardly believe it,” said a Virginian,

who appeared to be displeased with the turn the conversation had taken. "The example must have been set him by some white person. Your Philadelphia dandies have, the whole live-long day, no other amusement but staring women out of countenance."

"Well explained!" ejaculated a young man who had just returned from Paris; "a negro is a mere ape,—he is but a link between man and monkey. *C'est en effet un singe dégénéré.*"

"Witty dog!" said the Philadelphian; "just returned from France!"

"For Heaven's sake!" cried the Virginian, "let us not talk about negroes and abolition. I am resolved never to mention the subject again to friend or foe. If any of those emancipation preachers ever comes to my plantation, I have left the strictest order with my overseer to hang him on the spot. My neighbours are resolved to do the same, and I trust to God the custom will become general throughout the country."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the Philadelphian,—
"Virginia for ever!"

“ You may well drink to Virginia,” exclaimed the gentleman from that state; “ it is the pearl of the Union !”

“ So it is, so it is !” shouted the company. “ It has produced the greatest men in the United States !”

“ George Washington !” cried the Virginian.

“ George Washington !” echoed the company.

“ Thomas Jefferson !” continued the Virginian.

“ Don’t mention him, for mercy’s sake !” bellowed the Philadelphian; “ that vile blasphemer !—that infidel scoundrel !—that godless father of democracy, who has been the ruin of our country.”

“ In what manner has he ruined it ?” demanded I.

“ By introducing that vilest of curses, universal suffrage.”

“ But I see the country prosper more and more every year.”

“ You do not see far enough, sir,” said he. “ You do not understand the working of

universal suffrage. An example, perhaps, may illustrate the case. You may have heard of Mr. B * * *, who is one of our first citizens, has always been at the head of the very first society, and is worth, at least, half a million of dollars in bank stock, independent of a very respectable real estate. Well, sir: this same Mr. B * * *, at our last election, went himself to the ballot-box, and, with his own hand, put in his vote as if he were one of our simplest citizens. Was not that republican? Was there ever a better republican than Mr. B * * * ?”

“Certainly not. But what has that to do with the theory of universal suffrage, except that he was obliged to do so if he wished to vote at all?”

“Hear me out, sir; hear me out!” shouted the Philadelphian. “Scarcely had Mr. B * * * deposited his vote, when one of your regular ‘whole-hog, hurrah-for-Jackson men,’ who, according to every appearance, was not worth five dollars in the world, stepped up, and, right within hearing of our Mr. B * * *, told the

officer with the most impudent sneer that he intended to destroy Mr. B * * * 's vote. These, sir, are the consequences of universal suffrage."

"And then people wonder if we are not seen at the ballot-boxes," said the New-Yorker. "Who the d—l would scramble up among a parcel of ragamuffins in order to exercise a privilege shared by every pauper! I would as lief do common militia duty."

"What you have told of your friend Mr. B * * * in Philadelphia has happened to my friend Mr. H * * * in Baltimore," cried the Virginian.

"And to myself," added the Bostonian; "and since that time I am determined never to disgrace myself again by voting at an election, except to oblige a friend."

"Jefferson has ruined the country!" shouted the whole company.

"I only wonder," said one of my friends, "he has left sufficient brandy in the country for you to get drunk on."

"We get that from France," rejoined the

witty gentleman; “the Americans produce nothing but whisky and rum, and those only of the most inferior quality. Whenever we want anything decent, we are obliged to send for it from abroad.”

“That’s a fact,” added the Bostonian; “and pay the dealer a hundred per cent. profit on it.”

“And, after all, get it adulterated,” said the New-Yorker.

“I cannot conceive,” remarked the Philadelphian, “how a gentleman of fortune can possibly live in this country.”

“He is a great fool if he does,” replied the French wit. “England for a rich man, and France for a man of moderate fortune! that’s my motto; and as for us,—I mean the higher classes of Americans,—we are everywhere at home—except in the United States. *En Amérique les étrangers sont chez eux, tandis que les Américains ne sont chez eux que quand ils sont à l’étranger.*”

Here the company burst into a horse-laugh.

"Just returned from Paris," whispered the Philadelphian; "capital fellow!"

"Won't you translate it to me?" asked the Bostonian; "I used to know French when I went to school, but I have forgotten it since." (With a significant look.) "You know our girls don't speak it."

"'Strangers are in America at home, while the Americans themselves are only at home when they are abroad,' said our friend Charles, and he is certainly right; for America, ever since we are overrun by Irish and German paupers, is not fit for a gentleman to live in."

"If I had my own way," observed the Gallicised American, "I would never live in any other place but Paris."

"And I in London," remarked the Bostonian.

"Our tastes are so different," rejoined the former; "you like everything that is English,—I love all that is French. Besides, in France one gets so much more easily into society; the English, you know, are ridiculously exclusive."

"But have we not a minister in Lon-

don? Can we not always be presented at court?"

"Not always; there are too many applicants."

"But it is precisely the same thing in France. One of my acquaintances wrote me from Paris, that the American minister, during the space of one year, received no less than fifteen hundred applications for presentation to their French majesties."

"That may be: but in England one is often obliged to put up with the society of the middle classes, or at best with a sort of respectable gentry; while in France we never associate with anything less than a count or a marquis. My aunt would not speak to a *bourgeois*! She is descended from the Princess of M——y, which, you know, is one of the most ancient families of France; and likes Paris so much, that I don't think she will ever return to the United States. She can't bear America!"

"She would not be wise if she did," observed my friend, half ironically; "she re-

ceives a great deal more attention there than she would at home."

"So do all our women," observed the lawyer. "Our people do not know how to treat them, and our women do not know how to take advantage of their position; they are only fit 'to suckle fools and chronicle small beer.'"

"Very well brought in by our professional friend!" cried the Bostonian. "I say, Tom! what did your mother say when you left home to practise law in this city?"

"She gave me her blessing, and told me, 'Go, my son, and improve the talent God has given you, and you cannot fail to make money.' It was very kind in her, poor soul! she little expected I would draw on her regularly every quarter."

"But how do you spend your time," demanded the Bostonian, "if you do not practise law?"

"Literature, literature!" exclaimed the lawyer, emptying his glass. "We all dabble, more or less, in that."

"True," rejoined the Bostonian, "I forgot all about literature."

"What o'clock is it?" demanded the child of Paris, stretching himself with the air of an *homme blasé*."

"Nearly ten," answered my friend.

"Then I wish we might have breakfast, as I have promised to call upon a young lady at one."

"Don't you get yourself into a scrape, Charles."

"Don't you be concerned about me," replied Charles; "I have lived too long in Paris to be easily taken in."

"But our women are not like the French."

"That's one reason why I don't like them. Their everlasting pretensions, their air of superiority, and, above all, that imperious spirit which receives all our *petits soins* as a mere tribute which is due to them, have often completely disgusted me. I like to be at my ease with a woman; it's so much more natural."

"You are not singular in that," remarked

the gentleman from New York ; “ I have had the same taste ever since I was a boy of sixteen.”

“ What ! without having been in Europe ? ”

“ Certainly ; but then I was brought up in New York, which, you know, is a little Europe of itself. I have heard Frenchmen say, that, next to Paris, there is nothing like it in the world.”

“ Pooh ! ” cried the Bostonian, “ I ’d rather live in Boston ten times over ; and so would you, if you knew it as well as I do ; but that, you know, takes time.”

“ Don’t talk to me about Boston,” said the Philadelphian ; “ your women don’t even know how to dress.”

“ And run up bills at the mantua-makers,” rejoined the Bostonian.

“ The prettiest women in the United States are in Baltimore,” observed the Baltimorean.

“ Say rather *girls*,” interrupted the Gallo-American ; “ I have never seen a handsome woman in America yet : if there were one, you

would not see her in society ; she would stay at home nursing her babies."

"And send her young daughters into company for our boys to dance with."

"And dance they must, because they can't talk."

"What would you have a girl of sixteen talk of, pray?"

"Nothing that I care for. When I was in Paris, I only talked to married women. They alone understand the most delicate allusions, listen with dignity to our affecting tales, and are grateful for the slightest attention, without expecting an immediate proposal and saddling themselves on you for life."

"That would not do in this country," said the Bostonian with great earnestness ; "our women are brought up in a different manner."

"Why, upon my word!" exclaimed the Philadelphian with a horse-laugh, "our Boston friend talks to us as gravely as a New England schoolmaster. If you don't leave off some of these ridiculous Yankee notions, you'll never cut a figure in the fashionable world."

But you must excuse him, gentlemen; a certain puritanical air always sticks to these 'Boston folks' even after they have turned rakes."

"Oh! he would get over that too, quick enough," cried the lover of France, "if he were to stay a year or two in Paris. But, upon my honour! I cannot stay for breakfast; Miss L * * * would never speak to me again."

"I thought you only cared for married women?" remarked the lawyer.

"Neither do I care for anybody else," said the Frenchman; "but you know our girls, who have nothing to do but to walk Broadway in the forenoon, and to go to a party in the evening, govern society; and, if one does not wish to be considered an absolute boor, one must humour them."

"Then you consider your civility a mere act of duty,—a sacrifice brought to society?"

"Precisely so; and in the same light it is viewed by Miss L * * *."

"The d—l take your attention then! When

I want to pay my court to a woman, I do not want to do so in public."

"Miss L * * *, I assure you, courts nothing but satin velvet and gros de Naples. She will to-day, with her own soft hands, caress every piece of French silk which has passed the Hook for a week past; and I shall have the honour of accompanying her to every fashionable shop in Broadway."

"Delightful occupation this!" exclaimed the lawyer; "I had rather read law."

"Or drink juleps," cried the Philadelphian.

"Or play cards," said the New-Yorker.

"Or go to meeting," added the Bostonian.

"You may do what you like; but Miss L * * * is worth a hundred thousand dollars if she is worth a cent; and she has sworn never to marry, except an European or an American who has remained long enough in Europe to become civilized."

"Delightful creature that!" cried the Bostonian: "then I presume I should stand no chance with her at all."

*“ C’est selon. Vous êtes beau garçon, appartenez à une bonne famille ; vous avez de quoi vivre : mais vous chiquez, et, surtout, vous crachez, et Mademoiselle L * * * ne pardonne nullement de pareils forfaits.”*

Here the finished Parisian stepped before the looking-glass, tightened his cravat so as to give himself a colour, drew the pale emaciated fingers of his right hand a dozen times through his front hair, studied the most becoming position of his hat, arranged most tastefully two large curls which concealed the cavities of his temples, put on his French kid gloves, exercised himself in balancing a small switch,—which altogether did not take him more than thirty-five minutes,—and then left the room as if he had never known any one of its occupants.

“ Clever fellow that !” exclaimed the Philadelphian : “ spent all his father’s property in learning how to live, and is now marrying one of our richest girls.”

“ Capital hit !” cried the Bostonian.

“ Equal to a profession,” ejaculated the lawyer.

“ Pray, what may your profession be worth a-year ? ” asked the New-Yorker.

“ The profession is worth a great deal, but I myself get nothing by it,” replied the barrister.

“ How long is it since you practised law ? ”

“ Five years.”

“ And how much did you make by it ? ”

“ Twenty-five dollars, or thereabouts.”

“ How much rent do you pay for your office ? ”

“ One hundred dollars per annum.”

“ And what do you give to the boy that sweeps it ? ”

“ One dollar a month.”

“ Why don’t you rather take him into partnership ? ”

“ He would scorn the idea.”

“ And how many lawyers like you are there in New York ? ” demanded my friend.

“ Between three and four hundred, I suppose ; most of them sons of our first citizens. All the law business is done by half-a-dozen vulgar upstarts who come here from the country, and whom the public, God knows why, is

taking into favour. The profession of physic is a great deal better; the veriest humbug is making money by it."

"Because dead people tell no tales, I presume?"

"Not so much for that, as because a physician often hits where he strikes at random; and because, when a physician is not doing well with his professional practice, he is always sure to make a respectable living by quackery."

"Provided he has money enough to pay for advertising in the newspapers. But then physicians do not rank nearly as high in society as lawyers."

"Neither should they: our profession is, *par excellence*, that of a gentleman."

"And I can assure you," interrupted the New-Yorker, "that, in this city, there is no higher rank in society than that 'of a rich man.' I would rather have the reputation of Mr. A * * * than that of our learned chancellor K * * *."

"So would I," rejoined the lawyer. "Mr. A * * * must now be 'pretty considerably'

richer than Stephen Gerard ever was ; and when a man is once rich, you know, he can do everything."

" I believe myself," said the New-Yorker, " that we are a ' leetle ' too much given to money-making."

" And that every person connected with trade is too easily admitted into our first society," added the Philadelphian.

" In what other country," exclaimed the Virginian, " would you see a parcel of drummers or clerks admitted into the company of statesmen and legislators ?"

" In none," interrupted my friend, " except where merchants and their agents hold a higher rank than statesmen and legislators ; in which it is a disgrace to be a politician, and a reproach to be called a patriot."

At this moment one of the waiters announced breakfast ; which agreeable news put us all into the best possible humour, and, amid the hilarity excited by hock and champaign, we soon forgot fashions, politics, professions, and even the riches of this world.

While we had thus been wasting our time, a hundred ships had probably discharged their cargoes; a thousand emigrants from all parts of the globe had landed with big hearts and stout hopes to realise their dreams of the free and happy West. Many of them might have already commenced their peregrination towards the Mississippi, where their friends and relatives who preceded them were already clearing the wilderness, or enjoying the fruits of their labour. Fortunes might have been lost or won, merchants established or ruined, politicians raised or undone. Many an enterprising pioneer might have formed a plan for a new settlement; while hundreds of others were probably employed in transporting the produce of the fertilized West to the seaports of the Atlantic. Wealth and misery had perhaps been expected by thousands with the arrival of the mail or packet. Fathers might have been separated from their children,—husbands from their wives,—in the eager and universal quest of fortune, and many a heart left bleeding with the loss of all it held dear;

while others, happier than these, might have greeted the unexpected return of their friends and relatives.

Is it not strange, thought I, before I had drunk the first glass of champagne, that in a country which more than any other convinces one of the vanity of human pursuits,—in which wealth, honour, and distinction are mere bubbles floating on the surface of society,—men should be more eager after aristocratic distinctions, than where these are founded on an historical basis, and in accordance with the customs of the people? Such, however, is the irony of Fate, inseparable from nations as from individuals.

CHAPTER II.

Return to the City.—Arrival of the London Packet.—Reception of the Passengers.—American Speculations on an English Lord.—Introduction to a Fashionable Boarding-house.—A New England Minerva.—A Belle.—A Lady from Virginia.—Conduct of Fashionable young Ladies towards Gentlemen of an inferior standing.—Confusion produced by the Dinner-bell.

Duke Senior.—"What fool is this?"

Jaques.—"O worthy fool! One that has been a courtier,
And says, if ladies be but young and fair,
They have the gift to know it."

As You Like It, Act. II. Scene 7.

ON our return to the city, the steam-boat was quite animated. The packet-ship T*** had arrived from London, and, having reported a clean bill of health, was permitted to land her passengers. Our boat, therefore, went alongside of her, and was greeted by loud cheers from the steerage passengers, who,

dressed in their Sunday's best, were crowding the bow, gangway, and even the rigging of the vessel, eagerly awaiting their long-hoped-for delivery from imprisonment.

The company on board of our boat, which, besides ourselves, consisted of a dozen gentlemen and nearly as many ladies, returned the salute in a dignified manner by a wild stare of amazement ; until, turning to the captain of the packet, who had jumped on the bulwarks of our boat to assist in landing his passengers, a fashionably dressed lady, accompanied by a gentleman, inquired what sort of *cabin* passengers he had brought with him ?

“ Mr. and Mrs. * * *,” replied the captain, who, from his attention to the inquirer, appeared to have the honour of her acquaintance.

“ Don't know them,” said the gentleman ; then turning to the lady, whom I judged to be his wife, “ do *you* know them ? ”

“ I am sure I never heard their *names* before,” said the lady, tossing up her head.

“ Mrs. * * * and two children,” continued the captain.

“The wife of that vulgar auctioneer,” remarked the lady, “that wanted to outdo everybody. Well, she will find a sad change; her husband has failed since she was gone, and is said not to pay ten cents in a dollar.”

“Mr. * * *,” continued the captain.

“What sort of a person is he?” demanded the gentleman.

“La! don’t you know him?” cried the lady: “it’s that grocer who made fifty thousand dollars in a coffee speculation, and has ever since been trying to get into the first society; but did not succeed on account of that blubber-faced wife of his. They say that is the reason he went to Europe. Poor wretch! he probably thought people would, in the mean time, forget that he was a grocer.”

“Mr. and Mrs. * * * of Baltimore,” added the captain.

“Ah! our old friends, Mr. and Mrs. * * *. What a delightful creature that Mrs. * * * is! I used to be quite intimate with her at New Port; she always used to have such a choice set around her.”

“ Lady * * * and her daughter from London,” resumed the captain.

“ Lady * * * from London !” exclaimed the whole company,—“ where is she ?”

“ It’s that fine-looking woman there, standing by the side of that young lady dressed in black.” (Here the gentlemen applied their glasses.)

“ Both equally handsome,” cried a young man. “ Really English ! excellent fall of the shoulders !”

“ Only the bust a little too full,” remarked the lady, “ which is generally the fault of the English women ; and, besides, they have such enormously large feet.”

“ Who is with them ?” inquired one of the gentlemen.

“ Captain * * * of the * * th dragoons, who I understand is brother to Sir * * *.”

“ I presume they have brought their servants with them ?” observed the lady.

“ Two male servants, a lady’s-maid, and the governess of the young lady.”

“ Then they must be rich.”

“They have letters to Mr. A* * *, to Mr. and Mrs. * * *, and to many of our first people.”

Here the lady whispered something to the gentleman, which, as far as I could understand, sounded like this: “We shall see them at Mrs. A* * *’s, and you must try to get introduced to them; it will be just the thing for us if we should ever go to England.” (Aloud to the captain,) “Have you brought some more English people?”

“Lots of them,” replied the captain; “Mr. * * * and Mr. * * * of Manchester, Mr. * * * of Liverpool, Mr. * * * and Mr. * * * of London,—all in the cotton business.”

“We don’t want to know *them*,” said the lady; “business people, I presume,—full of pretensions and vulgar English prejudices. Have you brought no other *genteel* persons besides Lady * * * and Captain * * *?”

“Oh, yes,” replied the sailor, who began to be tired of the interrogatory; “a young sprig of nobility, Lord * * *, as they call him.”

“I am so sorry,” said the lady with a be-

witching smile, "to trouble you *so* much, captain; but really I should be *so* much obliged to you if you were to show me the young lord."

"It's that chap for'ard," said the captain, "talking to the engineer."

"Then I presume he is a Whig lord," remarked the lady.

"I don't care a d—n," muttered the captain as he was going away, "whether he be Whig, Tory, or Radical, so he pays his passage, and behaves himself like a gentleman."

Our deck was now covered with more than a hundred and fifty people, principally English and Irish, among whom there was a great number of women and children. Those that had come over in the steerage confined themselves for a short time to the forward deck; but after they had paid their fare, and ascertained that they were charged as much as those who occupied the chairs and settees that were placed aft the wheels, they gradually came one by one to partake of the same privilege, and, though not without hesitation,

took their seats among the better dressed part of the company. This was the signal for a general move; the ladies forming themselves into little sets by themselves, with a portion of the gentlemen standing by their side, and the unencumbered part of the latter walking the opposite side of the deck. But the young progeny of England and Ireland, emboldened by their success, disturbed them a second time by walking the deck in the opposite direction; and one of them, a swaggering youth of about nineteen, actually had the impudence of addressing a gentleman who had been a *cabin* passenger on board of the packet.

The gentleman answered without looking at him, and in so abrupt a manner, that the youth stole away very much like a dog that has been kicked by its master.

“These are the consequences of our glorious institutions!” exclaimed the gentleman, turning towards Lord * * *, who had taken his station at a little distance from him, and had evidently observed the reception his poor countryman had met with: “this fellow here would not

have dared to speak to *us* while on board of the packet; and now he is scarcely in sight of the American soil before he thinks himself just as good as any body else. Did your lordship observe the insolent manner in which he came up to speak to me?"

His lordship gave a slight nod of assent.

"These people come here with the notion that all men in America are free and equal; and that, provided they pay the same money, they are just as good as our first people."

"Hem!"

"But they soon find out the difference. People think there is no aristocracy in this country; but they are mistaken,—there are just as many grades of society in America as in England."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, my lord, and even more; and the distinctions between them are kept up much more rigidly than in England."

"I dare say they are."

"Yes, my lord: you will never see a gentleman belonging to our first society mix by any

chance with the second, or one of the second with the third, and so on."

"So !"

"And if it were not for these intruders, who come here by thousands and outvote us at the elections, our country would be just as refined as England."

"I dare say."

"Your lordship does not seem to believe it ; but you will yourself see the progress we have made in the arts and sciences."

"I have heard some of my friends say the same thing."

"Why, my lord, New York is a second London ; and, if it goes on increasing in the same manner as it has for the last fifty years, will soon have a million of inhabitants."

"Ay, ay !"

"And Philadelphia is nearly as large."

"Ah !"

"Yes, my lord ; and the society of Philadelphia is even more select than that of New York."

Here his lordship yawned.

“ But the most literary society is in Boston. Boston is the Athens of the United States.”

“ Is it a *nice* place ? ” inquired his lordship.

“ Why, I do not exactly know what your lordship means by a nice place ; but it is one of the handsomest places in the United States.”

“ Hem ! ”

“ It has a most beautiful common.”

“ Ay, ay ! ”

“ And a most magnificent state-house ; from the top of which you have a most superb view of the neighbouring country.”

“ So ! ”

“ And not more than three miles from it is Harvard College, the most ancient and distinguished university in the country.”

Here his lordship indulged himself in a very long yawn.

“ With a library of more than forty thousand volumes.”

“ Is that all ? ”

“ Why, my lord, this is a young country ; and, considering all circumstances, I think we

have done better than perhaps any other nation would have done in our place."

"No doubt of it," replied his lordship.

"Indeed, my lord, I think we can challenge history for a comparison."

"Just so."

"And, if we were only left alone, we would do better still: but we are completely overrun by foreign paupers; they come here in herds, while men of high rank" (here he bowed most gracefully) "are but seldom induced to visit our country."

His lordship gave a slight token of acknowledgment.

"And I trust, my lord, you will not repent of your resolution, and the fatigues of a long and tedious voyage."

The young nobleman nodded.

"You will find the Americans a very hospitable people."

"I have always heard so."

"And, though they cannot entertain you in your own style, they will do their best to please you."

Another nod of his lordship.

“ Your lordship must not forget that we are a young country. When we shall be as old as England, we shall perhaps do better.”

“ I don't doubt it.”

“ Your lordship is going to put up at the Astor House ?”

“ I do not know yet.”

“ Oh ! your lordship must put up at the Astor House ; it's the only decent public house in New York. I shall myself put up there ; and if your lordship will do me the honour ——”

“ I will see by and by ; my servant has taken the list of the best hotels in New York.”

“ Did you ever see such toad-eating ?” exclaimed one of my companions, as we landed on the wharf and were walking towards Broadway,—“ such a compound of arrogance and submissiveness, haughty insolence to an inferior, and cringing flattery towards a greater person than himself, as this man ?”

“ He certainly behaved very foolishly,” said

the second; "the British nobleman did not take the least notice of him."

"And did you see," said the first, "how every eye was fixed upon that lady and her daughter, as if they were the eighth wonder of the world?"

"I saw," replied the other, "that they were embarrassed by attracting so much notice."

"Did you not understand the captain to say that they brought letters to Mr. A * * * and to Mrs. S * * *?"

"I certainly did."

"Then they will be the town-talk for a month, and the subject of conversation for six months after, throughout the Union; and whoever is not introduced to them will be considered as vulgar: in short, they will be the fashion throughout the country, until somebody of a still higher rank shall come and eclipse them. Were you in the country when the Duke of Saxe Weimar was here?"

"Yes; but I was not in the habit of going much into society."

“Then you missed a great deal. You ought to have seen the cringing and fawning of these people, and how prodigal they were of the title of ‘Serene Highness,’ which, as a younger son, was hardly ever given him in Europe.”

“I know,” said I, “that he was actually worshipped in the Atlantic cities; and that Mr. W * * * and Mr. D * * * of Philadelphia were very angry at him for introducing their names and professions in his book, without mentioning that they were gentlemen.”

“The same, perhaps, that presided at the dinner given him by the *élite* of the German population?”

“The same, if I mistake not,” said I. “I yet remember the witty remark of a German emigrant who was present at the banquet. ‘These Germans,’ said he, ‘behave like so many dogs who do not know what to do for joy at having found their lost master.’”

“And what do you think was the cause of his triumphal entry into every one of our large cities? Nothing in the world but the desire

of our exclusives to see a duke,—to shake hands with a duke,—to talk with a duke,—to have a duke to dine with them,—and, above all things, to have a claim on the duke's reciprocal favours in case they should meet him in Europe. I know not what the duke's literary pretensions are; but, if Walter Scott had written a book on America, it could not have made a greater sensation than the duke's."

"You ought to make an allowance for the novelty of the thing," said I. "As yet, but few dukes have visited the United States."

"If their wonderment and toad-eating were confined to dukes and earls," replied he, "I would willingly pardon them; but they worship everything in the shape of a nobleman, until, by continually talking about nobility, they imagine themselves to belong to it. I wish all the poor nobles of the Continent of Europe would come here to get married, and to improve their estates. But they would have to play a difficult part in order to conceal

their poverty. A knight without a castle does not excite the imagination of an American damsel."

"I yet remember," observed my other companion, "how they pestered old Lafayette with the title of 'marquis,' as if his birth could enhance the sublimity of his character."

"You ought to have been in * * *," remarked the first, "when, a year or two ago, a rumour was spread that Prince Puckler Muskau had arrived in the country. A mustachoed *Russian* actually had the good fortune to be mistaken for him, it being understood that the prince wished to preserve the strictest *incognito*. There was no end to the attention bestowed on him by ladies and gentlemen, and to the particular manœuvres that were made in order to obtain an honourable mention in his book, until the poor fellow, tired of the obsequiousness of his admirers, resolved to inform them that they had been humbugged. There is but one offset to this species of toad-eating, and that is the some-

what too sturdy independence of our lower classes."

"That I willingly grant," said the first. "I know that the Duke of Saxe Weimar narrowly escaped a beating in the western country for presuming to hire a whole stage-coach for himself and his valet. Our country has not been settled long enough, and the conditions of men are too rapidly changing, for any one class to tolerate the peculiar manners and customs of the others."

"Do you know the story about the duke and the New York hackney-coachman?"

"I have heard so many anecdotes about the duke, that I cannot tell to which you refer."

"Why, they say that the duke went one evening in a hackney-coach to a party, and that the next day the coachman—or the driver, as he is here called—came for his money, asking the duke whether he was the *man* he had drove the night before; and, on being answered in the affirmative, informing him that '*he* was the *gentleman* what drove him,' and that he had come for his half-dollar."

“*Se non è vero, è ben trovato.* One thing, however, is certain, that in our attentions to strangers we seldom find the proper medium. If a man of title comes among us, the higher classes will caress and cajole him much beyond what the proudest nobleman could expect in any part of Europe; while, among the lower classes, he will often meet with a spirit of resistance which neither kind words nor money will be entirely able to overcome. Let him take the arithmetical medium between the two, and he will have no right to complain.”

“And I can assure you,” said I, “that in my own heart I have a much higher respect for the common American, who, in his conduct towards strangers, is solely guided by his own rude notion of dignity, than for the *educated gentleman*, who measures everything, and himself into the bargain, by the standard of another country.”

“Agreed! agreed!” cried my two companions; “for the one, however barbarous, has within him the elements of a national cha-

racter ; while the other, however civilized, is but a mutilated European."

We had now come up as far as the Park, and, perceiving by the city-hall clock that it was half-past two, one of my companions, under the plea of an engagement, turned towards Chamber-street ; while the other, with whom I had promised to dine, invited me to accompany him to his lodgings.

"Come," said he, "we have but half an hour before dinner ;* let me introduce you to the ladies of our boarding-house. It's one of the most agreeable ones in town, and always full of transient people."

"I confess I hate your boarding-houses," replied I. "They are neither private nor public ; one is deprived in them of most of the conveniences of regular inns, and yet not sufficiently quiet to be able to say one has got a home."

"Are you married ?" demanded my friend.

* At whatever hour people may breakfast in New York, they are sure to dine at half-past two or three.

“Why should you ask me that question?”

“Because you talk like a married man;—they are the best things in the world for bachelors.”

“On what account, pray?” demanded I.

“On account of the facilities they afford in becoming acquainted with ladies and gentlemen without an introduction; and because they are the nicest places for hearing the scandal of the town.”

“That’s precisely the reason why I dislike them.”

“If you are married, you are right; because a boarding-house is for a married woman what a boarding-school is for a young lady: one spoils the other by precept and example. Scarcely have the gentlemen left the house after breakfast to follow their respective avocations, before the women form themselves into sets in their several bed-chambers to have a talk.”

“That’s the most horrible practice I know, especially as young ladies are admitted to.

them, and the conversation there turns but too frequently on our foibles.”

“Your three-dollar boarding-houses,” rejoined my friend, “are capital things. One gets plenty to eat for little money ; turns in at an early hour in the evening in order to rise early in the morning ; and, when the men are about their business, the women attend to their own affairs. Besides, all our cheap boarding-houses are small, accommodating seldom more than two or three families, including that of the landlady ; but your fashionable establishments are constructed on the plan of regular barracks. You may quarter in them from ten to fifteen families, belonging to at least two or three different sets, visiting in different societies, and envying each other the very air they breathe. If a card be left for one of them, all the rest will talk of it ; if one goes to a party to which the rest are not invited, all the others will be jealous ; if one is more indulged by her husband than the rest, she is made the subject of remarks by all her *friends* ; if one shows herself smarter than the

others, all will turn up their noses, and declare with one voice that she is a forward woman ;— in short, I would rather expose my wife to the perils and inconveniences of a voyage by sea, than leave her with half-a-dozen women at a boarding-house. They are the destruction of domestic happiness ; break in upon the sanctity of private life ; blight a thousand germs of affection, which can only be matured in retirement ; make mutual tenderness the subject of ridicule, and publish those foibles to the world which love and forbearance would scarcely have discovered, and certainly never revealed. If I were a man without a fortune, I would a thousand times rather emigrate to the far West, and live with my wife in a log-house, than in one of those palaces constructed for the torture of husbands ! But, as I said before, they answer very well for bachelors ; I always advise my single acquaintances to go to a boarding-house in preference to a tavern.”

On entering the parlour, my friend presented me in due form to the landlady, who,

being not altogether displeased with his having brought a friend to dine with him, for which she had the right of imposing a tax of one dollar, received me with becoming graciousness. From her my friend turned to a lady of the olden times, dressed in the true style of the Pilgrims, with a plain, dignified, but a little too austere countenance. She received me with the utmost imperturbability, changing not a muscle of her face or body as she drawlingly uttered the words, "How—do—you—do?" By her side sat her daughter, a lovely maiden of between thirty and forty years of age, dyed in the deepest blue of New England learning, with a sharp aquiline nose, over which the reflection from her sharp grey eyes had diffused a sort of *aurora borealis*. Her upper lip was long, and her mouth unusually large; though her thin compressed lips were strongly indicative of firmness and prudence. She had the good sense to wear a cap; behind which, with becoming bashfulness, she not only concealed her own hair, but also a large portion of that, the continuance of which

hung in graceful curls over her waxen cheeks, touching the protuberance of the clavicle.

When my name was mentioned as “from Germany,” I thought my New England Minerva gave some slight sign of emotion, which, with more justice than personal vanity, I traced to the recollection of some difficult points in Kant’s *Metaphysics* ; and, desirous of avoiding a discussion on a subject on which neither her nor my wisdom could contribute much to enlighten the world, I pressed my friend gently towards the next lady, whose youthful appearance was much better calculated to put a man in good-humour for a dinner party. She was a new-blown rose, scarcely past sixteen, with black eyes and black hair, a straight Grecian nose,—and, to say all, she had dimples in her cheeks. Her neck, in gracefulness and whiteness, might have challenged that of a swan ; and, although her bust was somewhat diminutive, it corresponded well with her slender waist and the extreme delicacy of her hands and feet. In short, she was one of those American beauties one cannot behold without

loving and pitying at the same time ; for such is the exquisite proportion and symmetry of their limbs, that not an atom of them can suffer the least alteration without completely destroying the harmony of the whole. One might compare their beauty to that of an elegantly-turned period, in which you cannot alter one word without destroying the whole sentence ; or, to use a more correct simile, to a finished piece of poetry, which, by the alteration of a single syllable, degenerates into prose. I never could look on any one of those sylphs without feeling an involuntary emotion to place them, like other jewels, in some velvet *écrin*, to protect them from vulgar contact, or the blighting influence of the atmosphere.

On this occasion my usual tenderness for these victims of a rigorous climate was rapidly changing into feelings of a more ardent nature, when the young lady rose, and, throwing her head back and her breast forward, imitated by a sudden jerk of her body one of those ludicrous bows which the Gallo-American dancing-masters have substituted for the

slow, graceful, dignified courtesies of old; and which fashionable women in the United States, who are generally in advance of the most grotesque fashions of Paris, are sure to turn into a complete caricature. For a moment or two I took the spasmodic contraction of her body for the effect of some nervous excitement, produced, perhaps, by the sudden appearance of a man who was not yet old enough to be her grandfather; but the undisturbed ease with which she immediately after took her seat, and the perfect indifference with which she asked and answered half-a-dozen complimentary questions, soon convinced me that she must have been "out" ever since she was old enough to spell her name.

Next to the young *belle* sat two ladies, mother and daughter, who, to judge from their appearance, had not yet been long admitted into fashionable society. The mother, whose *mise* sufficiently betokened a woman that had given up every pretension to please, was between thirty-five and forty years of age; the daughter might have been eighteen. She

was a *piquante brunette*, with large black eyes, and a profusion of dark auburn hair, which, I dare be sworn, was all her own. Her pouting red lips, according to Lavater, proved her to be capable of sympathising with the feelings of others; and her embarrassment when I was presented to her showed that she had not yet become sophisticated in contact with the world. I told her all the pretty things I could think of; and secretly resolved, *coûte qui coûte*, to take my seat not far from her at the dining-table.

Next in turn was Mrs. * * *, a widow-lady of * * *, who I understood had been exceedingly handsome in her youth, and had now the singular good-nature of admiring and praising the beauty of others, without the dolorous reflection of many a withered *belle*—

“Sono stata felice anch'io.”

She had buried her pretensions with her love; and her claims on the world were now confined to that respect which even the worst of men, at all times and in all countries, willingly pay to a woman whose countenance serves as a

visible index to a virtuous life. Her husband had held a most distinguished rank as a public man in his State; and her son, brought up in the simplicity of country life, and imbued with those principles which in the revolutionary struggle animated the American patriots, was heir to an immense estate left him by his uncle. She received me with that friendly but dignified manner, which, without attracting or repulsing, puts a man at once at his ease, by leaving him in every respect complete master of his conduct.

We exchanged a few complimentary phrases; when my friend, leading me to the other part of the room, introduced me at once to half-a-dozen young ladies, who had formed themselves into a small circle, whispering to each other, and alternately laughing and looking at some of the gentlemen, who, completely separated from the ladies, were filling the background of the scene. My name without the "*de*" being announced to them, one or two just moved their chairs, while the rest continued their conversation without appear-

ing to take the least notice of our intrusion. These I knew were the manners of young ladies belonging to the first society towards gentlemen of an inferior order, or towards those whose rank, for some reason or other, were it but the omission of certain formalities, has not yet been generally established. I therefore observed to my friend, in a voice sufficiently low not to be heard by the company, that it would probably be best to leave these girls to themselves.

“By no means,” replied he in a whisper; “I have that with me which shall revenge every impertinence I have thus far suffered from them. They never knew my connexions here; and are only *cutting* me because they have been invited to two or three parties, where, owing to my short stay in this city, I did not care about being introduced. Besides, I mean to teach them better breeding for the future.” Then, turning to one of the young beauties, “Pray, Miss * * *,” demanded he, “what did you do with yourself during the whole of this beautiful day?”

“That’s a secret, sir; we don’t tell that to everybody.”

Here the young lady endeavoured to cut the conversation short by whispering something to her neighbour.

“But I thought I saw you come out of one of the shops in Broadway?”

“I assure you I did not see *you*,” replied the lady, with a remarkably acute accent.

“That I can easily account for,” replied my friend; “I was walking on the other side, and there were several carriages in the street.”

“Oh! I should not have seen you if I had stumbled over you. I never look at gentlemen.”

Here she again whispered to her acquaintance, with her eyes fixed upon us; but my friend was determined to see her out.

“Do you know,” said he, “Mrs. *** is going to give a magnificent ball?”

“I am glad to hear it,” replied the young lady.

“It is said the first invitations are already

given out. I dare say you have received yours?"

The young lady exchanged looks with her friend.

"Are *you* invited, sir?"

"Oh, I am an old friend of the house; I go there whenever I please."

"Even without being invited, I suppose?"

"You know, Miss * * *, I never stand upon ceremonies."

"One would suppose so."

"And yet I flatter myself I never give offence."

The lady made no reply.

"I hope," said he to the second girl, "you have got over your cold?"

"I don't 'mind' a cold."

"But it gives me great pain to see you afflicted."

Here the young lady rose, as if she intended to leave the room.

"Pray, Miss * * *, don't rise," cried my friend, "before I have delivered to you Mrs. * * *s invitation. I received it only last night,

with the request to hand it you as soon as convenient ; and I would not incur Mrs. * * * 's displeasure for the world."

" You are very kind, Mr. * * * ; have you got it with you ? "

" Here, Miss * * *, you see I directed it myself ; it will be one of the most brilliant parties given in New York this season."

" Well, I declare you are monstrous good-natured," said the young lady with a bow ; then, turning to her companion, " Dear Fanny, only look at Mrs. * * * 's politeness ; she invites me ten days *ahead*."

" Pray, won't you act the post-boy for me, Mr. * * * ? " said Fanny, looking half ironically, half condescendingly, upon my friend.

" Most willingly, if anybody will intrust me with a note to you, which I dare say will be in the course of to-morrow."

" Well, I do admire Mr. * * * 's gallantry, I declare !" cried the young lady, relieved from a painful embarrassment : " what would become of us if we had not Southerners and

Europeans" (here she deigned to notice me for the first time) "to take care of us? Our New York gentlemen will be devoted to business; you can get no more attention from them than from a stick of wood."

At this moment a stout negro rang the bell for dinner. It was one of those high-toned, shrieking bells, a single note of which would have set a musician crazy; but, to judge of the electrifying effect it produced on the whole company, it was far from being disagreeable even to the most refined American ears. The gentlemen especially smiled with approbation, as it called them once more from helpless idleness to active industry; and, in their eagerness to obey its summons, offered their arms to young and old, in order to have the good fortune of the first *entrée*. It was a scene of complete confusion,—one of those which occur but rarely in America, except just before dinner,—a *mêlée* of ladies and gentlemen. I saw three young men offer their arms to an old lady near the door, and a pretty little creole woman was actually marched off under double escort. I

felt my heart bleed as I looked round for my unsophisticated *brunette*, and saw her dragged along by a young broker, who was already smacking his lips in anticipation of the turtle. Her mother was gone long ago: when she heard the bell, she made an instinctive move towards the door, and was immediately snatched off by a young man, who made the most of her in the way of taking precedence of his friends. Even the old widow-lady vanished with a gentleman from Boston. What was to be done? Without a lady there was no seat to be had at the upper part of the table, and, in fact, no certainty of obtaining a seat at all; and there remained yet two Englishmen,—a physician, and an agent of a house in Manchester,—a Spaniard from the island of Cuba, two Portuguese, my friend and myself, to be helped to partners. Fortunately for us, however, the young lady who had just passed such high encomiums on Southern and European gallantry, had already seized my friend's arm, before he had a chance to offer it; and her amiable companion thought herself bound to

accept the offer of mine. The remaining girls were equally divided among the representatives of the three nations ; but the British Æsculapius, being the stoutest man of the company, was a host by himself, and formed the rear of the train.

CHAPTER III.

The Dinner.—Reflections on the Homage paid to American Women.—Observation of a Fashionable young Lady on American eating.—The Party after Dinner.—An American descanting on the Fashions.—Parallel between English and American Women.—Manner of rising in Society.—Extravagance and Waste of the Middle Classes.—Toad-eating of Fashionable Americans in Europe.—Their Contempt for the Liberal Institutions of their Country.—Manner in which the Society of America may be used as a means of correcting the Notions of European Exaltados.—The British Constitution in high favour with the Upper Classes.—Southern and Northern Aristocracy contrasted.—Aristocracy of Literati.—American Women in Society and at Home.—Pushing in Society the cause of Failures.—Western Aristocracy.—An Aristocratic Lady in Pittsburgh.—Aristocracy in a Printer's Shop.—Philosophical Windings-up of the Party.

“ To feed, were best at home ;
 From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony ;
 Meeting were bare without it.”

Macbeth, Act III. Scene 4.

WHEN we entered the dining-room, soup and fish were already removed, and active

operation commenced on chickens, ducks, turkeys, beef, veal, mutton, and pork,—the seven standing dishes in the United States. We were fortunate enough to obtain seats not far from the landlady, right in the middle of a garden of blooming beauties. The ladies were all *en grande toilette*, though among the gentlemen not one appeared to be dressed for dinner. The conversation was very loud; but, notwithstanding, completely drowned in the clatter of knives and forks. I perceived that the women talked, not only much more, but also much louder than the men; American gentlemen of the higher classes being indeed the most bashful creatures, in the presence of ladies of fashion, I ever saw. They approach women with the most indubitable consciousness of their own inferiority, and, either from modesty or prudence, seldom open their lips except to affirm what has been said by the ladies. One is always reminded of poor Candide's honest prayer, "*Hélas! madame; je répondrai comme vous voudrez.*" I have seen one of the most distinguished old

gentlemen in the United States, — one who held the highest rank in the gift of the American people, and whose learning and knowledge on most subjects rendered him a most pleasing and entertaining companion of men, — betray as little self-possession in the presence of women as if he had been making his *début* in society, and this too in the house of one of his most intimate friends.

This excessive awkwardness in the men, to which even the most distinguished of their race make no exception, must be owing to something radically wrong in the composition of American society, which places men as well as women in a false position. The conviction of this fact must force itself on the mind of every impartial observer who has had an opportunity of making himself familiar with the customs and manners of the higher classes. There appears to be a singular mixture of respect and want of sincerity on the part of the men with regard to the women, produced,

I believe, by the unnatural position which the latter hold wherever they are brought into contact with the former.

In the first place, American ladies occupy, from mere courtesy, a rank in society which is not only opposed to that which they hold in private life and in their own families, but which is actually incompatible with the exercise of discretion on the part of the gentlemen. "The ladies must be waited upon;" "the ladies must be helped;" "the ladies must be put into the carriage;" "the ladies must be taken out of the carriage;" "the ladies must have their shoe-strings tied;"* "the ladies must have their India-rubber shoes put on;" "the ladies must be wrapped up in shawls;" "the ladies must be led up stairs and down stairs;" "the ladies must have their candles lit for them when they go to bed." On every occasion they are treated as poor helpless creatures who rather excite the pity than the

* This is generally done by gentlemen in the absence of footmen.

admiration of men; and as the services they require are numerous, just in proportion to the scarcity of hired servants, the gentlemen are obliged to officiate in their stead.

These continual exigencies cannot but render the society of women often irksome to men who are daily engaged from ten to twelve hours in active business, before they dress to do the agreeable at a party; and hence the retiring of the ladies is but too frequently hailed as the signal for throwing off restraint, or, as I once heard it called, “for letting off the steam,” and being again natural and easy. If in any of these matters the men were allowed to use their own discretion in bestowing attention on those only whom they like, all would be well enough. The ladies would receive a great deal of voluntary tribute; and the gentlemen, delighted with the privilege of a choice, would be more prodigal of their *petits soins* to those who would have a smile in return for their devotion. But, instead of this, a fashionable American is harassed by an uninterrupted series of exactions, made for

no other purpose than for gratifying “the ladies;” while the rules of society are such, that he can scarcely ever find a chance of making himself agreeable to a particular individual. Hence an American *salon* exhibits nothing but generalities of men and women, in which no other merit is recognised but that which belongs to the sex. In this manner American ladies are worshipped; but the adoration consists in a species of polytheism, in which no particular goddess has a temple or an altar dedicated to herself.

Whenever an American gentleman meets a lady, he looks upon her as the representative of her sex; and it is to her sex, not to her peculiar amiable qualities, that she is indebted for his attentions. But look upon the same lady when she returns home from a party, or after the company has been dismissed at her own house! She is indeed honoured and respected, a happy mother, a silent contented wife, and complete mistress at home; but how seldom is she the intimate friend of her husband, the repository of his secrets, his true

and faithful counsellor,—in one word, the better half of his existence! And yet what woman would not rather be *that*, than an idol, placed on an artificial elevation in society, in order to be deprived of her true influence on the deliberations and actions of men. I have undoubtedly seen American ladies who were all a woman could wish to be to their husbands; but I scarcely remember one, especially in fashionable life, who was not quoted to me as an exception to the rule.

Such were my reflections as I took my seat next to the fashionable angel who, by doing me the honour of accepting my arm, was actually doing me out of my dinner. There were but six black servants in the room to wait upon more than fifty people; and in South Carolina I had often seen six negroes wait upon one person, without being able to make him comfortable. Under such circumstances, the business of a gentleman is to see that the lady next to him does not leave the table without having had something to eat;

and for this purpose no small exertion and ingenuity are required, especially when one does not know the names of those sable attendants, and has no opportunity of slipping half a dollar into their hands.

At first we waited a while with great patience, showing to our greedy neighbours that we were neither as hungry nor as ill-bred as themselves; but when I saw one dish after the other disappear—the tender loin of the beef gone—the oyster sauce dried up by the side of the carcass of a turkey—everything which once had wings reduced to its bare legs—and these legs themselves to mere drumsticks—

“George!” exclaimed I in despair, “come and help this lady.”

“Never mind me, sir; I get plenty,” whispered the fair.

No answer from the servant.

“John, I say! why won’t you come hither?”

“My name is not John, sir,” grinned one of the negroes as he passed by to wait upon another person.

“Sam, then !” I cried, “and may the Lord have mercy on you !”

“Wat wil you be hept to, massa ?” ejaculated a dark, glossy mulatto, whose face looked as if it had just been varnished.

“What will you have, Miss * * * ?” demanded I of the lady.

“Why, I really don’t know. I have not had time to think of it. They all eat so fast.”

“Sam !” exclaimed a stentorian voice from the other end of the table.

“Yes, massa,” replied Sam, and was seen no more.

“Don’t you think, Miss * * *,” said I, “it would be better for you to make up your mind as to what you intend to eat before you come to dinner ? It would, I think, be an easy task, as in every large hotel or boarding-house there appears to be the same daily variety of standing dishes.”

“I am not hungry,” replied the lady, with a furtive glance on the plate of her *vis-à-vis*, on which the white tender breast of a turkey,

hugged in the embrace of a ruddy slice of Virginia ham, was softly reposing on a bed of mashed potatoes, and that delicious vegetable designated by the poetic appellation of "squash." The extreme borders of the plate were garnished with cranberry and apple sauce; and a quarter of a cabbage, placed with the dexterity of an artist in the background, just completed the perspective.

"Neither am I," said I. "Will you allow me to take wine with you?"

A slight convulsion of her body, similar to the one previously described,—and of which no one can form a correct idea who has not witnessed the effect of a galvanic battery on a person touching the two poles,—informed me of her acquiescence. Accordingly I filled both our glasses with champaign; and, looking at her with all the tenderness which the effervescence of that sparkling liquid is capable of inspiring, emptied mine to the very bottom. When I raised my eyes again I found hers dissolved in dew; for, instead of drinking, she had only suffered the spirituous ether to play

with the end of her nose, the liquid itself remaining untouched in the vessel. I now began to feel concerned for her; so, seizing the arm of one of the attendants, who was just attempting to make his escape with the remnant of an oyster pie, I made at once a prize of his cargo, and without further ceremony shared it equally with my fastidious companion.

“Now what vegetable will you be helped to?” demanded I.

“To none, if you please, with a *pâté aux huîtres*,” was the reply of the young lady.

“But, before you will have done with the *pâté aux huîtres*, the vegetables will be gone.”

“I am sorry for that,” said she; but I cannot bear taking so many things on one and the same plate. The very sight of it is sufficient to take away one’s appetite.”

Here her *vis-à-vis* bestowed upon her a long look of astonishment, resting his left elbow on the table, and reducing the velocity of his right hand, which was armed with a formidable three-pronged fork, almost to zero.

“Indeed,” continued she, without appearing

to notice his emotion, "our people do not know how to eat."

"Indeed, I think they acquit themselves admirably," said I.

"And do you call *that eating*?" said she. "What must the English think of us when they see us act in this manner? Oh! I wish dinner were over! Are the gentlemen not already leaving the table?"

"Yes, Miss * * * ; those, probably, whose business will not allow them to stop for pudding."

"Oh, I did not wish to deprive you of your enjoyment; I would merely tax your politeness with the request of accompanying me to the door."

"I know no greater happiness than that of obeying your commands," said I, doing as I was bid. "I shall have the honour of joining you by-and-by in the parlour."

"Pray, don't let me interfere with your favourite amusements. I know you like to take a glass of wine and smoke a cigar after dinner."

“I can assure you,” said I, “I do not smoke at all.”

“What! you don’t smoke? For mercy’s sake! I hope you don’t *chew*?”

“I do not use tobacco in any shape.”

“Well, that is certainly a great recommendation!” exclaimed she. “I wish I could persuade *our* gentlemen to imitate your example; it would perhaps cure them of the disgusting habit of spitting.”

All this was said sufficiently loud for every one near her to hear; after which the young lady, having attracted the general attention of the company, vanished through the folding-doors with the same ease and composure as a French actress who has been the favourite of the public for years.

When I regained my place, pudding and pastry had disappeared; and, the cloth being removed, dessert was placed on the table. This was of course the signal for the general departure of ladies and gentlemen; so that in about five minutes my friend and myself, two or three elderly gentlemen, the agent of the

Manchester house, and the fat English doctor, were the only persons remaining in the room.

“Let us club together,” said the doctor, “and call for an extra bottle of old Carolina madeira.”

“I am glad to hear that,” cried my friend; “but, above all things, let us get some biscuits and cheese,—I have not had a mouthful of dinner.”

“Served you right!” said the doctor; “why will you be prating to those girls? They have had their dinner long ago at a confectioner’s shop. I have made it a rule of my life, ever since I came to this country, to take my place at the end of the table, as far as possible removed from everything feminine; and to the observation of this maxim I am indebted for my good figure, in spite of the fogs and the easterly winds.”

“Why, you know, doctor,” interrupted a thin-looking American, “that your shape would not answer at all for a ladies’ man. In the first place, you have the chest and shoul-

ders of an English collier; your face is full and round, as though you had been swilling porter all your life; your legs, especially your thighs, are the very essence of beef; and, above all, sir, you have a paunch!—a paunch which would frighten any of our West-end ladies into hysterics! An American exquisite must not measure more than twenty-four inches round the chest; his face must be pale, thin, and long; and he must be spindle-shanked, or he won't do for a party. There is nothing our women dislike so much as corpulency: weak and refined are synonymous."

"That's a fact," rejoined my friend; "I heard Mrs. * * *, of F——a, descant on the vulgarity of English women, because they were accustomed to *walk*."

"And in all sorts of weather, too, without being laid up six weeks with the hooping-cough!" cried the doctor.

"The fact is," rejoined the American gentleman, "your English women *are* of a much coarser make than ours; they are eternally taking exercise for their health; and, as for

physical strength, I believe there are no women equal to them in the world."

"And it is well for them they are so," observed another American, who, I understood, was a gentleman established in New York; "for they are not treated with nearly the same respect as ours."

"If by respect you mean external attention," rejoined the doctor, "and more especially exemption from labour and personal exertion, you are certainly right as far as regards your *city* women of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, &c. Our London women of the middle and even higher classes can walk alone, stand alone, and, when taking tea or coffee, do not require a gentleman to hold the saucer for them. Whenever they require an attendance of this sort, they hire it; and, until they can afford paying a page, manage to dispense with his services."

"Excellent Englishwomen!" cried the third American, who happened to be a Boston lawyer, and a great admirer of England. "Would to Heaven our Yankee women were like yours!"

I do not mean to cast a reflection on the high moral qualities of our ladies; for I believe that, in regard to virtue, they can challenge the world for a comparison. I speak of the excessive pretensions and fastidious conduct, not only of our rich fashionable women, but also of the wives and daughters of our men of moderate fortune. No sooner do they find out that their husbands or fathers have laid up a couple of thousand dollars in a bank, than they set up for ladies of the *ton*; and then they want to ride in their own carriages; live in houses for which they pay from eight hundred to a thousand dollars' rent; give parties to which they invite people whom they never met before, and from which they exclude their friends and nearest relations, in order not to be shamed by their presence; rake up a relationship with some colonel in the revolutionary army, or some noble family in Europe,—the latter is by far the most respectable; hang up the portraits of their ancestors in their parlours; make the tour of the springs in the summer; and spend a winter in Washington. Waste

becomes now the order of the day ; and if, in spite of their scrambling after fashionable society, they do not obtain access to the very first of it, the men are teased and tormented until they leave their native city to seek in one of the numerous ‘growing places’ of the West an asylum in which they cannot be outdone by the *old families*.”

“Our Yankee moralist is right,” exclaimed the New-Yorker ; “nothing can be more contemptible than the endless pretensions of our *parvenus*.”

“If you speak in this manner,” rejoined the Boston lawyer, bestowing a knowing glance on the New-Yorker, “you pronounce sentence on nine-tenths of our industrious citizens. What great difference, after all, is there between a *parvenu* of ten years’ standing, and a *parvenu* who is just making his *début* in society ? I have nothing to say against those who by perseverance and success in business have acquired fortunes that enable them to live in a style superior to that of their neighbours ; but there is a way of playing the

bourgeois gentilhomme which exposes a man deservedly to ridicule."

"Like Mr. * * * the grocer, who has just turned India merchant, and who will crowd his rooms with the most costly furniture, in such a manner that you cannot pass from one into the other without running against a table, a sofa, or a piano."

"Or like Mrs. * * *, the wife of the ironmonger, who has taken it into her head to patronize the arts, and has overhung the nice clean walls of her parlour with all the dirty daubs her husband has bought on his late tour through Italy."

"Or like Mrs. * * * of Philadelphia, the wife of the auctioneer, whose *bals costumés* are said to rival those of London and Paris, and whose husband gives to his male friends 'a treat' once a fortnight."

"Or like those poor devils who live 'all in a row' in the West-end of our city without ever seeing one another, each expecting to be in due time admitted into fashionable society on paying the penalty of a party."

“ To which none but the gentlemen come.”

“ And those only at a very late hour, just in time for supper.”

“ I should not care for all that,” resumed the Bostonian, “ if one could get away from that sort of society ; but this is actually impossible, unless one emigrate to the South or West. The same artificial distinctions exist at the South : but then in the Southern States the distinctions are real, not imaginary ; they date from the time of the colonies, and, being in part based on the possession of real estate, do not change with every fluctuation of trade. A man may there visit ten years in the same circle without seeing a single new face, except that of a stranger ; while in New York every new quotation of exchange excludes a dozen families from the pale of fashion, and creates a dozen new candidates for its imaginary honours. Every commercial loss or gain,” he continued, “ exercises a controlling influence on the happiness and prospects of our families. It changes at once their friends, their associates, and often their nearest relations, into

strangers. How many ties are thus broken by a single failure in business ! and how many failures occur, because the heads of those families dare not retrench, — have not the courage to live within their income, — cannot bring themselves to lead their children out of a higher circle into a lower one, — have not the heart to blight their prospects in life ! No ! they must play the hypocrite, — live as though they were men of fortune ; marry their daughters, who are brought up in the most expensive habits, to young spendthrifts, who expect them to inherit fortunes ; and then die, without leaving to their heirs wherewith to procure for them a decent funeral ! This, sir, is a picture of our first society, established on the system of credit ! And then how much real happiness is lost in the foolish endeavour to get into the first society of our Atlantic cities ; which, after all, differs from the second and third, from which it is necessarily daily recruited, in nothing that could strike an European except in the greater display of wealth and waste. The little Miss at school is

already panting for the society of ‘the higher girls,’ and cuts her old playmates the moment her father can dress her well enough for better company. No sooner has she left school than she teases and torments her parents until they allow her to give a party, to which, of course, none but her new acquaintances are invited; and which, with her, is the beginning of a new era,—the commencement of her formal separation for life from all her early friends, relatives, and often her own parents. This, sir, is the first act of a young fascinating creature of seventeen, introducing her to the attractions of fashionable life. At that tender age, when girls in other countries are considered as mere children, she has already learned to check the better impulses of her nature, in order to conform to the customs and usages of the world. But this is not all. The bold, sophisticated girl, who has struck out her independent course of life, is no longer conducted and watched by her parents, whose inferior rank in society does not allow them to accompany her to any of the balls and parties to which she is

now invited : her mother ceases to be the repository of her secrets, her guardian, and friend ; she is barely asked her consent when the young heroine is at last going to be married. If, under these circumstances, and despite of the perverse rules of society, the conduct of our women remains still unexceptionable, it must be ascribed to the force of religion, to the constant occupation of the men, the practice of early marriages, and, above all, to that all-embracing power of public opinion, which in no other country punishes the vicious and guilty with the same unrelenting severity."

" And a good deal perhaps also to that part of public opinion which punishes the gentlemen as severely as the ladies," observed the doctor, finishing his glass.

" You may perhaps object," continued the Bostonian, who appeared to be bent on a homily, " that a similar sort of toad-eating to the higher classes exists also in England ; the lower order of the English being even more submissive to those above them than the

same classes in America: but on the Continent you seldom see a man or woman pay their court to a superior, except for a special object; the mere admission into fashionable society rarely induces a man to throw away his self-respect, and to cringe and fawn before titled personages."

"It is for this reason that the manners of certain classes of the English are less free and natural than those of the same orders on the Continent; the former being only easy and agreeable in the society of their native town, where their character is known and understood. Go and visit all the courts of Europe, from Paris to St. Petersburg, and from Stockholm to Naples, and if you find a toad-eater caressing the feet of majesty, and exercising his utmost ingenuity to be on good terms with the most distinguished noble families, you may be sure he is either English or American. But the American will outdo the Englishman. He will be twice as humble before ribands and stars, and three times as insolent to an inferior, as honest John Bull. He will feast six months

on the breakfast of a duke, and then regale his countrymen six months longer with the recital of its splendours. He will actually beg himself into society, solicit letters of introduction on the most humiliating terms, pocket quietly a thousand refusals, and, when finally he succeeds in being smuggled into the drawing-room of a princess, is the first to betray her hospitality in publishing her foibles to the world !

“Very few Englishmen will go as far as *that* ; and, if there be some that forget to stand sentinel on their dignity, there are fortunately enough of those whose rank, title, and fortune, readily procure them the distinction others are obliged to *court*. But the Americans who go to Europe leave their self-assumed rank in society behind ; they go thither as plain citizens of a republic, dependent entirely on their letters of introduction, and the civility of those to whom these letters are directed. Their first care, therefore, is to impress all with whom they come in contact with the belief that, though the spirit of the American constitution recognises no nobility, such an

order of society nevertheless exists *de facto* ; and that they themselves belong to the ‘few select’ of that ‘large Augean stable.’ I assure you I quote the very words of Americans, as I have often heard them ; for railing against their country constitutes one of the chief amusements of our Yankee exquisites at home and abroad.

“ In this manner they hope to ingratiate themselves with the old aristocracy of Europe, whom they flatter and console with repeated assurances that the ‘mob government of America’ will not last half a century ; and that they themselves are so far converted to the ancient and noble doctrines as to be determined to leave their country for the purpose of sojourning amongst civilized men. On the principle, then, that *one* repentant sinner is more acceptable in the eye of *the Lord* than a hundred just men, these Americans are admitted into favour ; but, notwithstanding their partial success, few of them understand the art of *se laisser aller*. One can always see that they are not brought up for sociable idleness ; and when a

bill is presented,—were it even for a patent of nobility,—you would see them wax pale with horror as they thrust their hands into their pockets.”

“ I often remarked the penuriousness of fashionable Americans in Europe ; but I cannot say that this is a fault to which they are much addicted at home,” observed my friend, with a sarcastic look on the New-Yorker, who, I understood, had just commenced a wholesale business without capital.

“ In the United States,” rejoined the Bostonian, “ a man will frequently be liberal with the money that is not precisely his own ; the credit system allows him to spend more than his income : but in Europe, where he is obliged to pay for everything as he goes along, he soon learns to hold on to the cash.”

“ That is one reason,” said my friend ; “ and the second is, he does not know how to spend his money. He lays it out on things Europeans value but little, and is most parsimonious where Europeans are most liberal. I knew a Bostonian in Paris who would pay

twelve francs a day for his fire, and in the evening drive in a common hackney-coach to a party ; another would give his wife a shawl of a thousand francs, but refuse her some Nancy embroidery ; and a third would purchase for his wife and daughters pocket-handkerchiefs at a hundred francs a-piece, but object to their being washed. I was present when an American lady, who was told by a French gentleman that at a certain shop on the Boulevards there were very nice embroidered ladies' handkerchiefs to be had at two napoleons a-piece, exclaimed, '*Comment ! et vous croyez que je puisse porter des mouchoirs à quarante francs ?*'

“ ‘*Et quels mouchoirs portez-vous donc, Madame ?*’ exclaimed the Frenchman, half embarrassed and half amazed.

“ ‘*Je ne porte que des mouchoirs à six-cents francs.*’

“ ‘*Et comment sont-ils donc faits, ces mouchoirs là ?*’ demanded the astonished Frenchman.

“ ‘*Comme ce-ci,*’ replied the lady, turning

up her nose, and throwing a huddled-up, dirty, pocket-handkerchief on the table, which the Frenchman, either from delicacy or fear, did not dare to unravel.

“ ‘*Ah ! en vérité,*” cried the gallant Parisian, turning away his head, “*ils sont excessivement jolis.*’

“ When the same lady was afterwards told that she could perform the journey from Paris to Nice for less than a thousand francs, she remarked to her husband who had made the inquiry, ‘ Oh, I dare say *some* people may do it even for less ; but we always travel *en grand seigneur.*’ ”

“ Pray,” said the Bostonian, “ did that woman never claim any relationship to some European prince ? They are seldom very extravagant unless they can prove themselves descended from a nobleman.”

“ To be sure she did,” replied my friend ; “ not indeed to a prince, but to a duke, whose name is preserved in the history of his country. She told her friends and acquaintances that she only came to Europe to assist at the coronation

of the Queen of England ; which, she being a *dame d'atour*, could not very well be performed without her."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed the doctor; "I believe anything of your fashionable characters, except that they can live a month without Epsom salt or calomel."

"I dare say she would have been just as humble and cringing in company of a British peer, as she was haughty and insolent with a poor Frenchman," observed my friend. "She would have gone through all the regular stages of toad-eating, in order to procure, as a particular favour, a place in some corner of a room from which she might have peeped at the lovely person of her British Majesty."

"I am sure of that," cried the Bostonian; "that's the way our people do when brought within the sphere of attraction of a court."

"And is it not strange," resumed my friend, "that the Americans, who at home are the most thin-skinned people in the world,—always ready to punish in the most severe, and sometimes in the most atrocious manner, every

offence offered to the nation or to individuals, —should, on leaving home, so far lay aside their character and self-respect as to literally creep through the palaces of princes for the sordid satisfaction of being able to say that they have been there ?”

“The contempt of our fashionable people for the liberal institutions of their country, and their admiration of everything that is European, are so well known and understood in Europe,” observed the Bostonian, “that of all the travellers through France, Germany, and Italy, the Americans suffer the least molestation or inconvenience from passports. Their presence in any country can only serve to chill the ardour of the liberals, as there is indeed no greater punishment for an European demagogue than to pass a year or two in the United States. Our fashionable society is capable of curing the maddest republican of his political distemper. Just send him over here for two months, with plenty of letters to our first people, and he will return home as quiet and loyal a subject as any one born in the sunshine of royal favour.”

“ And, on the other hand, it is the European emigrants that have been chiefly instrumental in establishing our present mob government,” observed the New-Yorker. “ Those blackguards—I mean principally the Germans and the Irish,—come here with the most ridiculous notions of liberty and equality. Having been slaves all their lives, they set an exaggerated value on freedom, without knowing the value of property. The British constitution, after all, is the best adapted to the wants of a free people ; isn’t it ? ”

“ Most assuredly it is,” replied the Bostonian ; “ we all know it, but none of us dare say so aloud, for fear of being mobbed : but murder will out, you know.”

“ What can a man know about our institutions, if he be not ‘ raised ’ among us ? ” rejoined the New-Yorker. “ Our institutions, after all, are but the English, improved or mutilated, just as you please ; but, be this as it may, I prefer the English to our own. I cannot bear equality.”

“ Nor I,” said the other American.

“Nor I either,” said the Bostonian; “and I know a number of our people who would not stay in Paris, on account of the ridiculous equality which pervades all classes of French society. They have had quarrels with their servants, and have been summoned with those scoundrels before the same tribunal.”

“That’s the reason I dislike the Irish so much,” resumed the New-Yorker. “They are scarcely a year in the country before they pretend to be equal to our *born* citizens. I should have no objection to their coming here, provided they would be contented to remain servants,—the only condition, by the by, they are fit for: but when they come without a cent in their pockets, pretending to enjoy the same privileges as our oldest and most respectable citizens, my blood boils with rage; and I would rather live among the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope, than in the United States, where every cart-man is as good as myself.”

“I assure you,” said my friend, with a significant smile, “no people in the world are

✓

better satisfied of their superiority than the higher classes of Americans. If their pretensions were recognised by the people at large, there would be no happier set of men in the world. There is no species of perfection which they do not attribute to one another: so that one is constantly reminded of the fable of the two asses, one of which found the other an excellent singer, while the latter discovered in the first a great talent for public speaking; the rest of the animals seeing neither the singer nor the orator in either of them. I am at once for an aristocracy like the English, with some lasting, real distinctions. Our patriots have ruined the country by abolishing the institution among us. It would have protected us against the vulgarity of our moneyed men, and produced noblemen instead of fashionable dandies, who are talking of the privileges of gentlemen before they are entitled to the distinction."

"You are right," exclaimed the Bostonian, "to ridicule the wooden butterflies that play about our glass-house flowers. No one ever

dreamt of mocking the manners of the Dutch merchants. They stick to trade ; and, if our merchants were to do the same, they would command the respect of the world, instead of affording amusement by their attempt at aristocratic distinctions. You cannot but esteem Brother Jonathan when you see him on the ocean, or in his workshop ; but his affectations in the parlour seldom fail to disgust you. In the *salon* the most fashionable of our race is but an anomaly, with not one-tenth part the liberality, politeness, and affability of an European. His bow, his smile, his constrained ease, his affected carelessness, his very apparel, and, if he venture himself so far, his conversation, are unnatural ; and you are actually moved to compassion when you see him sacrifice himself at a dance. The old people will tell you they give parties for their children ; the girls dance because it is the way to get engaged and married ; but the young men look upon society as a business they must go through at specified intervals.”

“ And yet, mean and contemptible as the

elements of our first society may be," rejoined my Southern friend, "they produce incalculable mischief. In the first place, they are the means of spoiling our women; not that I mean that they destroy their virtue,—which, thank Heaven! is proof against greater temptation than that of our fashionable men, who, moreover, have so little time for the *petits soins* which the ladies require of them, that they prefer the marrying for good and all to the tedium of a long courtship; but it makes our women indolent, unfit for the performance of domestic duties, and, in many instances, prodigal and sophisticated in the extreme,—and this at an age when Englishwomen scarcely venture out into company. And how small is the number of our fashionable people whose fortunes are at all commensurate with their expensive habits! The country at large is rich, on account of the great ease of our middle and even lower classes; but, in attempting to vie with the splendour of the English nobility, we introduce a reckless system of expenditure, wholly above the means even of our wealthiest

people, and undermining the solid basis of our national wealth."

"Society in America," continued my friend, "is characterised by a spirit of exclusiveness and persecution unknown in any other country. Its gradations not being regulated according to rank and titles, selfishness and conceit are its principal elements; and its arbitrary distinctions the more offensive, as they principally refer to fortune. Our society takes it upon itself to punish political, moral, and religious dissenters; but most of its wrath is spent upon the champions of democracy. That society is the means of seducing our unsophisticated country members, making them believe that republicanism is only fit for backwoodsmen, is a fact too notorious to be mentioned. It destroys our independence in words and actions, and makes our duties of citizens subordinate to the exactions of a *coterie*. What man is there in this city that dares to be independent, at the risk of being considered bad company? And who can venture to infringe upon a single rule

of society, without being published to the world, and persecuted for the remainder of his life? We take it as an insult offered to our joint judgment when a man stubbornly follows his own mind ; for we are accustomed to everything, except seeing a man not influenced by the opinion of his neighbours.

“ How often have I envied Englishmen for the privilege of being independent in private life ! And how often did I wish myself in England, where I might be permitted to have an opinion of my own, and express it, without suffering in the consideration of my friends and the public ! Political liberty is, after all, but an abstract and general good, never felt by individuals, unless it be joined to freedom of intercourse, and that degree of independence which leaves a man in all matters relating to himself sole arbiter of his actions. Intolerance and persecution in private and social intercourse are far more odious, and, perhaps, more destructive to the higher faculties of the mind, than the most systematic political despotism

acting from above. And yet I would pardon our society all its faults, if it did not act perniciously on the women."

"Let us hear what complaint our Anglo-maniac has against our women," exclaimed the New-Yorker, who had already looked more than twenty times on his watch as if pressed by urgent business.

"Oh!" cried my friend, "my charge against them is small, and refers principally to our exclusives: I am sorry that they are unfit for anything but society, and that in society they do not fill the place which belongs to them."

"A mere trifle!" said the doctor, filling his glass.

"I do not speak of the great mass of our women," rejoined my friend; "much less of the wives and daughters of our Western settlers, who, Heaven knows, are as busy and industrious as the best German housewives: what I have to say applies merely to our aristocracy, and still more to those who aspire to being considered candidates for that distinc-

tion. Our women in general are, as you know, not brought up to work,—the chivalrous spirit of our men spurning such a vulgar abuse of their delicate limbs; they ought, therefore, to be brought up to save, or at least to live within their income. If, for instance, one of our tavern-keepers will not allow his wife and daughters to appear before his guests,—if a shopkeeper will not exhibit his wife before his customers,—I shall certainly respect the feelings and principles of both: but if the tavern or shop keeper's wife insists upon living in Broadway, wearing nothing but satin and gros de Naples, and is constantly emptying her husband's purse for the purpose of 'pushing in society;' if she does not regulate her expenditure according to his means; if she takes no pains to ascertain what these means are; in short, if she be but a useless article of furniture in his parlour,—then I certainly maintain that there is something radically wrong either in her education or in the state of society of which she is a member.

“If we had as many distinct and established orders of society as in England, there would not be that everlasting attempt to go beyond one another which particularly characterises our women, and, joined to the credit system, is the cause of so many failures; a circumstance which, in whatever light merchants and bankers may view it, is nevertheless one of the greatest moral evils with which an honest community can be afflicted.

“A large portion of our matrons,” he continued, “would, I am sure, be more happy in wearing muslin or calico, instead of silk; and the men, instead of racking their brains in order to find the means of providing for a thousand unnecessary expenses, would find their homes cheap and comfortable. They would look upon their wives as friends and counsellors, instead of mere companions of their pleasures. Instead of ‘boarding out,’—a custom which is the grave of affection and domestic happiness,—young husbands would be enabled to keep house, and to give their wives a home; a thing which is not so much ren-

dered difficult by the badness of the servants,—the usual complaint of the higher classes, — as by the exactions of society. I know many an American that is now living in Europe merely because he does not wish to board, and is not rich enough to keep house according to our expensive fashion.

“ If this state of things were confined only to the wealthier classes,—to those who have large estates and expectances,—all would be well enough ; the extravagance of the rich furnishes scope for the industry of the poor : but with us, where young men without fortunes marry, at the age of twenty-one, girls of eighteen that have no money either, where the husband relies solely on his wits for supporting his wife and children, but few men can indulge themselves in reckless expenditure without growing indifferent as to the ways and means of paying their debts. I am proud of the enterprising spirit of my countrymen, who are always full of speculation and hope,—who live in the future, and care little about the present ; but I regret that our fashionable ladies too

should have caught the inspiration. A large portion of these, as has been said before, know little or nothing about their husbands' property; they live in houses built or rented on credit, drive in carriages that are not paid for, wear clothes that are charged by the milliner, sit down to a dinner which stands in the book of the victualler, and finally sink to rest on beds that are settled for by a note of six months. They have no other regulator of their expenses but fashion;—but not the fashions of their own country, grown out of the natural position and the manners and customs of the people; but the fashions of Paris and London, made for a different people,—at least different as regards custom and circumstances;—and are at last as much surprised at the bankruptcies of their husbands as their creditors, who took them for rich men.

“And this evil, as I said before, is not confined to a small class; it extends to all who wish to be considered ‘genteel,’—an appellation which is daily working the most in-

calculable mischief. In order to be ‘genteel,’ it is necessary, in the first place, to know nobody that is *not* so; and our fashionable women and girls have a peculiar talent for staring their old friends and acquaintances out of countenance, as often as they take a new house. Next, they must live in a particular part of the town, and pay not less than from one to two thousand dollars’ rent. Then they must give so many parties a year, and not be seen wearing the same dress more than once in a season. And last, though not least, their husbands, brothers, and cousins must give evidence of their good breeding by abusing the republican institutions of their country.

“After they have been ‘genteel’ for a number of years, they are permitted to set up for ‘exclusives;’ for which purpose they must live in the West-end of the town, keep a carriage, claim a relationship with some French duke or British earl,—a colonel in the army or a captain in the navy will no longer answer at that stage,—invite the most distinguished

Europeans (by way of hospitality) to their houses, and have their parlours ornamented with pictures in proof of their taste for the fine arts."

"*A-propos!*" exclaimed the doctor; "you remind me of my friend Mr. * * * in Boston, who commissioned a gentleman of his acquaintance to purchase in Italy ten thousand dollars' worth of pictures for his parlour. What sort of pictures did he get? I believe you know him, don't you?"

"He did not want 'any good ones,'" replied my friend; "for, when Mr. * * * offered to purchase half-a-dozen originals, he was quite out of humour about it, telling him that for that money he expected to have all his rooms full. But let me continue my argument."

"Don't interrupt him!" vociferated the Bostonian; "he is just labouring under a spell of Southern eloquence."

"An American exclusive," resumed my friend, "is not yet a finished 'aristocrat.' There are yet a thousand things about him which betray his low origin, or, as the English

have it, ‘smell of the shop.’ Though extravagant and wasteful, he has not yet learned to spend his money with ease and gracefulness. The women do not know how to speak French or Italian; and the boys, brought up sometimes at a public school, (for there are few families in the Northern States incurring the expense of a private tutor,) would necessarily imbibe some of the *vulgarising* spirit of democracy. As a finish then to the education of father, mother, and children, and perhaps, also, to drown in oblivion the tedious particulars of their rise and progress, our highest and best families emigrate for a short time to Europe, in order, in the society of noblemen, to attain that peculiar high polish and suavity of manners which it is impossible to acquire amidst the bustle of business and the vulgar turmoil of elections.

“How our ladies’ hearts beat when they think of Europe and its pleasures!—of the gay and graceful baronets!—the insinuating lords!—the rich, proud earls!—the noble dukes!—and, oh! the kings and princes and

their courts! What magic is there in that word 'KING!' to the mind of a *genteel* American! and how far will he stoop for the distinction of being admitted into his presence! What privilege, I heard them say, is it to shake hands with the President of the United States? — every blackguard, dressed in boots, can do the same. What honour is there in being present at a levee at the White House in Washington? — every journeyman mechanic may enjoy the same pleasure without even a decent suit of clothes. But a reception at a King's, or a ball at court, are things to be proud of! They have slandered an American minister at St. Petersburg, by saying that he knelt before the Emperor; but I can assure you that in England Americans have assumed that attitude before the Queen!"

"That's all right!" ejaculated the doctor; "a man cannot be too humble before a woman; but I do not like to see a Yankee humiliate himself before a King."

"And in proportion before every duke or earl," interrupted the Bostonian. "I remember,

a year ago, while at Paris, to have called on an American lady who had been honoured by a visit from a distinguished Tory leader in the House of Lords. She felt, of course, the raptures of the blessed during his protracted presence; and when he at last rose to take his leave, and actually vanished through the parlour door, she observed to a young American, who had just been announced and was now entering the room, that the gentleman whom he had met in the entry was actually the famous Lord L——t. ‘Lord L——t!’ exclaimed the youth, sinking into a chair; ‘was it really Lord L——t?’ Here followed a pause of one or two minutes, during which he in vain struggled to recover his senses. ‘And this was Lord L——t!’ cried he, gasping for breath, and running to the window to catch another glimpse of the lord. ‘What an extraordinary man that Lord L——t is! How did you become acquainted with Lord L——t? Won’t you introduce me to Lord L——t?’ ”

“Such scenes as these are not worth re-

lating," observed my friend. "They occur every day in every capital of Europe infested by our Yankee exquisites. What I most regret is, that our women are the principal actors that flourish in them. I would rather marry a young Tartar girl, than a fashionable American *belle* after she has made the tour of Europe. If she was heartless before she left America, she is sure to return marble-ised to her own country. And as for our striplings, who are actually worshipping the feudal institutions of Europe, they come home with signets and coats of arms, and a lordly loathing of republican equality."

"And this is not only the case with your inexperienced boys and girls," observed the doctor, sipping his glass; "but applies also to your men of letters, your distinguished orators and philosophers. However fiercely they may extol republican institutions in their writings, they all sink the republican in company with lords and ladies. 'They know nothing of Berkeley-square, though they *fancy* it to be inhabited by respectable peo-

ple ;' but give a long account of the routs in the neighbourhood of Grosvenor-square, and are particularly happy in remembering the country seats of the most distinguished peers of the empire."

"I grant you all this," replied my friend ; "and yet I would pardon Cooper all his sins that way for the love he once cherished for his country. He has suffered severely for the democracy of his earlier days ; for the meanest scribbler for a penny paper in the United States thought himself justified in pouring out his venom on the author of 'The Pilot.' He is, after all, the only American that ever poetised American history ; the nice, gentlemanly, English-looking Washington Irving has, in his 'Knickerbocker's History of New York,' only raised a laugh at the expense of his country."

"And yet," observed the Bostonian, "he might have written the history of every American town, from the famous city of Boston down to the creole habitation of New Orleans, without rising into notice in America, had his

works not been endorsed by the British public. No people in the world know better than our first society that they have no taste of their own; and it is for this reason that our poets must first seek a reputation in England, before they can expect one in their own country. Washington Irving had more credit as a merchant than as an author, and succeeded in his writings only after he had failed in business. Without the latter circumstance, which may really be called fortunate, his talents would perhaps never have been developed. But let the Carolinian go on with his aristocracy; he has already kept us over an hour, and, if you continue to interrupt him, he will never finish."

"I have very little more to say," said the Southerner; "because the tour of Europe *finishes* an American aristocrat. He has now been in England, France, and Italy;—he has, with his own eyes, seen the great and mighty upon earth;—he has exchanged visits with some of them, and has perhaps been asked to partake of their hospitality. It is now the

business of the women to collect and carefully to preserve the many testimonials of respect which they may have received in the shape of cards, invitations, and letters; in order, on their return to the United States, to *prove* to the incredulous that they have actually been the fashion in *Europe*, and that in consequence they have a right to be it in America. They are now advanced to the rank of 'leading people,' and an invitation to their houses is as much sought after as a letter of introduction to an European nobleman. 'They know Lord So-and-so!' 'She was quite intimate with Lady So-and-so!' 'He stayed a week at the country seat of the Marquis of * * *!' 'She was presented at the Queen's!' 'Both their names were in Galignani's Messenger!' 'She is corresponding with the wife of the Honourable Mr. * * *!' 'The Duke of * * * was quite attentive to *her*!' 'The Prince Royal of * * * accompanied her on horseback!' And a hundred other fine and flattering things are told of them in our fashionable *salons*; until Mr. and Mrs. * * * are not only the fashion,

but the envy of every family in Broadway.

“ Fortunately for the business habits of our people, they cannot make proselytes among our industrious male population: but our fashionable women, one-half of whom live in boarding-houses, and the other half in houses kept by their servants, are wondrously taken by such accounts of the ‘success of the Americans abroad ;’ and exhibit by their unnatural, affected, forced manners, and by the total abjuration of everything American, their solicitude to be governed by the same elevated standard of refinement. On this account many of our women think themselves vastly superior to their husbands; and a certain portion of them actually have a higher standing in society. Hence the thousand incongruities and absurdities you meet with in our fashionable circles; all proving that our people do not act from habit and conviction, but from imitation and precept, and that, consequently, they are always at a loss how to act when they come to a part not contained in their lesson.

They will send out invitations to dinner at eight o'clock, merely because this is a good hour in London, deranging thereby not only their own business, but the business of everybody they ask; commence balls and parties at eleven or twelve o'clock, and end them at four in the morning, though at eight they have to be again at their counting-rooms; and visit at an hour when the majority of the people are at dinner. Fashions which are worn in London and Paris in the month of October, are introduced immediately after their arrival here in the beginning of winter. They must have musical *soirées* without music; *thés littéraires* without literature; and they must crowd their staircases with statues, to show that they have a taste for sculpture. One finds in our fashionable society some feeble, and, for the most part, unsuccessful imitation of everything that exists in Europe, but scarcely one original object as a proof of our national existence: so that, if it were possible to transfer a person directly from some fashionable French or English party to one of our stockholders' balls

in New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, he would scarcely perceive any visible change; though he might consider himself transported from the West-end to the City, or from the Faubourg St. Germain to the neighbourhood of La Bourse."

"Pass the bottle!" cried the doctor; "I believe he has finished his long speech."

"I have a word to say now," interposed the Bostonian; "I must wind up my argument with regard to our women as compared to the English."

"Is he a 'hard' speaker?" inquired the New-Yorker.

"He isn't quite equal to the member from Massachusetts," replied my Southern friend, "who spoke seven hours in succession against time; but, before he continues, I must ask him whether he has seen Mrs. * * *'s *tableaux vivants*. I believe she had some highly classical representations the other evening."

"Just so," said the doctor; "in which her daughter made the Sphinx, and Mr. * * *, the Wall-street shaver, the Numidian lion."

“Capital!” ejaculated the Bostonian; “but I refer to no individual in particular—I only speak of the absurd tastes of our fashionable women in general. I would ask, by way of finishing the picture which our friend from Carolina so happily commenced, and in order to settle the question of reckless expenditure, on which you all seem to exhaust your eloquence, how many of those that belong to our fashionable society can afford its expenses without impairing their estates?—how many of them would be able to continue them without the assistance of credit?—and how many of them, if their estates were to be settled tomorrow, would be able to pay fifty cents in a dollar? I am accustomed to bring everything down to *figures*. We at the North are a practical people: we like to *calculate*.”

Here the New York gentleman took out his watch, and, pretending to be in a great hurry, abruptly left the room.

“Do you think *he* is solvent?” said the doctor drily, emptying his glass.

“Not I,” replied the Bostonian. “Out of

fifty persons that commence business in Boston, forty-nine are supposed to fail within the first five years ; it takes them that long to learn the trade : and *we* boast of doing business on a solid capital in comparison to the New-Yorkers. But they beat us all hollow in the way of credit ; our most cunning brokers in State-street are nothing in comparison to a regular Wall-street shaver. But let me come to the point. Our fashionable people are prodigal of other people's money ; and, in entertaining their guests, go to the extent to which they are trusted. Take, for instance, the case of one of our pushing retail dealers. He is, of course, a married man, and has one or two partners who are also married. Each of them lives in a house for which he pays not less than six hundred dollars' rent, and the furniture of which costs from three to four thousand dollars. Each of them keeps one male and one or two female servants, and, in short, supports his wife *as a lady*. Each of them must ask people to tea, each must give din-

ners to his friends, and all ‘push to get into society.’ Suppose these men to do business on their own capital, — a thing which does not occur once in fifty cases; and let us suppose that their joint stock in trade is worth a hundred thousand dollars; let us take for granted that, deducting losses and bad debts, they realise a clear profit of ten per cent. on their capital; and I can prove to you that, in the ordinary course of things, they must be bankrupts in a few years. What, then, are we to expect of the generality of our young men, who commence business with a borrowed capital, on which they pay from six to eight per cent. interest?”

“Let him figure it out!” cried the doctor, — “let him figure it out! he is a Yankee.”

“With all my heart,” said the Bostonian, “if you will only promise not to interrupt me.”

“Suppose the borrowed capital to consist of one hundred thousand dollars?”

" Then the interest, at six per cent. would	Dollars.
amount to	6,000
" Store rent; say	1,200
" Two clerks with a salary of 300 dollars per	
annum	600
" Insurance on stock	1,000
" House rent for two partners, each 600	
dollars	1,200
" Expenses of housekeeping, interest on	
furniture, servants, &c. each 2500 dollars	5,000
" Ladies' dresses, parties, carriage hire, and	
incidental expenses, say each 1000	
dollars	2,000
" Gentlemen's dresses, horse hire, news-	
papers, and tobacco, say each 500	
dollars	1,000
	<hr/>
" Grand sum total	18,000
" Clear profit on 100,000 dollars' worth of	
stock (deducting 25 per cent. bad debts),	
say 10 per cent.	10,000
	<hr/>
" Deficit	8,000
	<hr/>

" Pray, what ruins these men, but the want of domestic economy in their own households? An English shopkeeper would be content to live in a house for which he would not pay more than from fifty to sixty pounds' rent. His carpets would be Kidderminster, instead of Brussels or Turkey. His wife would require

no other servant but a cook or a kitchen-girl ; and would no more dream of giving parties, or vieing with the splendour of merchants and bankers, than she would of bringing up her children to match the peers of the empire. This is the advantage a shopkeeper has who marries an *English* girl. He gets, at least, a wife that wears well,—a substantial housekeeper, that administers to his comfort, and assists him in laying up a penny for rainy days. If her husband dies, she is, for the most part, capable of continuing his business, and making an honest living for her children. With all the morality, virtue, and beauty of our women, they are but helpless creatures. The wife of one of our young ‘merchants of respectability’ requires more waiting than, in proportion to her rank, an English peeress ; and, ten chances to one, does not even understand superintending her servants. Her husband, in addition to ten or twelve hours’ hard labour at his counting-room, has to take care of his household, in which he is intrusted with the several important and honourable functions of steward, butler, groom,

footman, and housemaid; while the education of the children is only at the extreme North and South—in New England and in the Southern States—superintended personally by the mother.

“ One of our fashionable young women,—innocent, kind, gay, handsome, beautiful, as she may be,—is after all of no use whatever to a poor man who has to work for his living; except that, by trebling his expenditure, she is a most powerful stimulus to industry and enterprise. If he fail in business, or die without providing for her and her children, she has no other means of saving herself from starvation than that of opening a boarding-house; which is generally so ill managed, that in less than a year she is involved in debt, and sees her furniture brought to the hammer.

“ As long as our young merchants get rich by speculations, or have their notes shaved by a Wall-street broker at the rate of one per cent. a month, they may be right in marrying those dear little objects of care and caresses; but when, at some future day, wealth will be-

come the reward of labour and frugality, our 'respectable young men' will be obliged to select their wives for the kitchen as well as the parlour. All I can say in favour of our fashionable women is, that they do more for the settlement of the Western country than the soil, climate and the cheapness of land."

"And what is most remarkable," interrupted my friend, "is, that those very women, after they have resided a year or two in the Western States, become, by the strong force of example, and perhaps also from dire necessity, real Dutch housewives."

"That is to say," observed the Bostonian, "they scrub their own floors, clean the door-handles, wash the windows, sweep the rooms, make themselves busy in the kitchen, and walk about with children in their arms; all which, I can assure you, is done by the women of the best society in the Western States without destroying either their health or good looks. Women there are obliged to work, because they cannot find servants to do the work for them; and yet they are infinitely happier

than your New York or Philadelphia ladies, who rise at eight or nine, breakfast at ten,—then, as Miss Fanny Kemble would have it, *potter* three or four hours,—then have a chat with three or four women of their set,—then walk Broadway or Chesnut-street, or go shopping,—then sit down to dinner,—then *potter* again until six o'clock,—then take tea,—and finally dress for a party, at which, unless they be very young, they stick up against the wall until supper.”

“ I certainly wish for a medium between the extreme hardships of American women in the Western country, and their comparative indolence in the seaports,” observed my friend; “ and yet I am glad that the republican spirit of the West is opposed to servitude of any kind, for it is a great corrective of our vulgar aristocracy of money. If, in the Western States, you could at all times command a sufficient number of hands, the possession of large real estates would soon lay the foundation of an aristocracy much more substantial and durable than that which effervesces on our sea-

board. The human heart, after all, is aristocratic—that is, selfish—by nature; so that, if the resistance of the lower classes does not check the aggressions of the higher ones, the latter are sure eventually to get possession of the government. The Western settlers, who are obliged to work, and their wives, who must themselves superintend their households, have not even the time necessary for forming those exclusive coteries which govern society in the Atlantic cities.”

“And yet,” said the Bostonian, “it is not more than a year ago that I heard the wife of a Pittsburg lawyer complain of the state of their society, which was ‘dreadfully’ spoiled by the number of adventurers pouring in from the Eastern States.”

“Capital!” cried my friend; “the probability is she herself was but settled a few years.”

“That was precisely her case,” rejoined the Bostonian; “and, while she was playing the old family of the place, she wiped her children’s noses with her apron.”

“ Now, I like that kind of aristocracy,” cried the doctor, “ which is obliged to wipe babies’ noses, and that kind of family which is considered ancient when it has been three years stationary in a place ; for it affords the surest proof that the true elements out of which an aristocracy may be formed are not yet to be found in the country.”

“ You are out again,” cried the Bostonian. “ You Englishmen, for some reason or other, never understand the particular genius of our people. We have ‘lots’ of aristocracy in our country, cheap, and plenty as bank-bills and credit, and equally subject to fluctuation. To-day it is worth so much,—to-morrow more or less,—and, in a month, no one will take it on any terms. We have, in fact, at all times, a *vast deal* of aristocracy ; the only difficulty consists in retaining it. Neither is the position of our aristocrats much to be envied. Amidst the general happiness and prosperity of our people, their incessant cravings after artificial distinctions are never satisfied ; they are a beggarly set of misers that will not sit down to

dinner as long as there is a stranger present whom they are obliged to ask ; and, as for the women, their position is truly deplorable. They are neither employed in domestic pursuits, nor does our society furnish them the *agrémens* of Europe. In a country whose population is the most active and industrious in the world, they are troubled with *ennui*, and have the whole livelong day no other companions than a few inquisitive creatures of their own sex. Were our women more engaged in the pursuits of active life,—were our state of society such as to offer them a more extended sphere of influence and usefulness, — did they receive less homage as *women*, and more as rational accountable beings, their aristocratic squeamishness would soon yield to a more sensible appreciation of character, and a patriotic attachment to their country.”

“ The same aristocratic feeling which pervades our fashionable women, operates also on our girls in the lower walks of life,” observed the Southerner ; “ only that it is there called ‘ independence.’ Now, I like independence in

men, but I despise it in women. The dependence of women on men is the proper tie between the sexes, and the strong basis of gallantry and chivalry. I dislike your 'independent factory girls,' though they *did* turn out six hundred strong, all dressed in white, to be reviewed by General Jackson." *

"Since you mention the 'independent factory girls,' you ought not to forget the girls of our independent press," observed the Bostonian.

"What sort of girls are those?" demanded my friend.

"They are employed as compositors and *pressmen* in our printing-offices," replied the Bostonian, "reducing the wages of our journeymen printers, and preparing themselves for housekeeping by composing the works of our best authors. I know two of them who became expert cooks by composing 'The Frugal

* When General Jackson, on his tour through the Northern States, visited Lowell, the girls employed in the cotton manufactories of that place turned out, dressed in white, to welcome the American President.

Housewife,' by Mrs. Child; and a third prepared herself for her approaching marriage by setting up 'The Mother's Book.' These girls, you must know, are distinguished by a highly aristocratic feeling; and would no more condescend to speak to one of our waiting-women, than the wife of a president of an insurance-office would deign to leave a card for the poor consort of a professor in one of our colleges. *They dress and act as ladies*; and, if you do not believe their claims to 'gentility,' they will show them to you in print."

"It is not more than a month ago, that, while in Washington, I had occasion to call at the office of one of my friends who is an editor of a daily paper. Not finding him there, I entered the press-room, where, much to my surprise, I found three pretty girls, dressed as if they had been measured by *Madame Victorine*, and in *bonnets* corresponding to the last fashion of the *Rue Vivienne*, busily engaged in multiplying the speeches of our orators and statesmen. This, however, was done in the most dignified manner; for when I asked for

the master of the establishment, where I could find him, when he would be in, &c. one of them, in lieu of an answer, merely pointed to a large placard stuck to one of the columns which supported the ceiling, on which there was the following peremptory request, printed in gigantic letters :—

“ ‘ *Gentlemen are requested not to stand and look about,—because the ladies don’t like it.* ’ ”

“ And did you then immediately leave the room ? ” inquired the doctor.

“ I had no other alternative,” replied the Bostonian : “ if I had remained one minute longer, there would have been an article against me in next morning’s paper. This is a sort of trades’ aristocracy formed by the female part of our population ; for such seems to be the disgust of our girls for domestic occupation, that they will rather become tailoresses, printers, bookbinders, or work at a manufactory, than degrade themselves by ‘ living out.’ ”* And yet I am bound to say they maintain their aristocratic dignity better than many a

* The usual American appellation for living at service.

stockholder's wife and daughters ; and I have never known a single instance in which they did not completely succeed in keeping their fellow-workmen in subjection and at a proper distance."

"This deserves a sentiment," cried the doctor ; "let us call on our friend from Massachusetts to propose one."

"With all my heart, gentlemen," said the Boston lawyer. "I give you 'The Young Ladies' Trades' Union, and their champion Mr. C——y of Philadelphia : may they never reduce the price of labour of their fellow-workmen, but rather succeed in raising their own!'"

"Bravo!" shouted the company ; "and worth as much again, coming from such a source. Old C——y himself could not have proposed a nobler sentiment. Pity it won't be published ; it would make him immensely popular !"

"Pray, don't pass him the bottle," cried my friend ; "he is done up for to-day. I never knew a Bostonian to talk of raising the price of labour except when he was drunk."

“Nor I either,” cried the doctor. “I always heard them boast that no Jew could live amongst them, because they cheated him.”

“Then let us vote him drunk, and fine him an extra bottle,” said the doctor.

“He will never forgive you *that*,” observed my friend.

“Call for the wine,” cried the Bostonian; “call for it instantly,—we must drink it on the spot.”

“We shall not have time for it,” observed my friend; “for, if we do not quit this very moment, the negroes will drive us away in order to set the table for tea.”

“You touched the bright side of his character,” whispered the doctor to my friend as he was slowly rising from the table. “He has the most irresistible aversion to spending money; but, when caught in a trap like this, I don’t know a person who can affect so much generosity.”

CHAPTER IV.

Joining the Ladies.—Education of a Fashionable Young Lady in New York—her Accomplishments.—Tea without Gentlemen.—Commercial Disasters not affecting the Routine of Amusements in the City of New York.—The Theatre.—Forest come back to America.—Opinions of the Americans on Shakspeare and the Drama.—Their Estimation of Forest as an Actor.—Forest and Rice contrasted.

“A maiden never bold ;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself. And she—in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, everything,—
To fall in love with what she feared to look on !”

Othello, Act I. Scene 3.

ON returning to the parlour, we found the ladies, whose number had considerably increased by the arrival of some “transient people,” alone ; the gentlemen having “sneaked off” to their respective counting-rooms. They were grouped round the piano, on which one of those little

creatures that played the exclusives of the boarding-house was "practising" the "Infernal Waltz" from "Robert the Devil;" the rest were talking, whispering, giggling, or amusing themselves with feeling the quality of each other's dresses.

"What a delightful creature that Miss * * * is, I declare!" said an elderly lady, whose *embonpoint* sufficiently proclaimed her Dutch origin,—English women being said to grow rather thin in America; "her mother must be proud of her."

"Yes," replied another lady, who *was* rather thin; "but it is said she has not yet paid the teacher who taught her daughter all those pretty things."

"That is nothing to the purpose; I speak of the young lady," rejoined the good-natured woman.

"Surely," whispered a young creature, who was none other than the young girl I had lost sight of before entering the dining-room, "she knows nothing about music; she has been practising that piece ever so long."

“That is a fact,” said her mother, addressing herself to me; “my daughter went to the same school with her, they had the same masters, and, with the exception of trigonometry and astronomy, for which Susan never had any particular taste, she beat her in everything. My daughter can play ‘The Storm;’ and her music-master tells me, when a young lady can once do *that* she can do anything.”

I bowed assent.

“And as for trigonometry,” she continued, “I care not how little my daughter knows of that. It’s all *arches*, and *angles*, and *compliments*, as she tells me, which are of no use to a young lady except in society. But Susan knows a great deal more about *magnetism* and *electricity*,—don’t you, my child?”

Here the girl looked very bashful.

I congratulated the mother on possessing such a treasure; and was just thinking of something pretty to say to the girl, when I was interrupted by the old lady.

“Yes,” said she, “although I ought not to say it, being my own child, I was present at

the last exhibition, when she explained the whole of the electrical machine. And she is doing just as well in history. How far have you got in that, Susan?"

"About *two-thirds* through with the book," said Susan; "but how queer you talk, Ma!"

"And pray, madam, what boarding-school is it your daughter went to?" demanded I.

"It's the *first* in the country, sir — kept by the Misses * * *, at T* * *, three miles from A* * *."

"And what branches are taught in that school?" demanded I, with an ill-suppressed feeling of curiosity.

"I don't remember all the hard names, sir," replied the old lady, somewhat embarrassed. "Susan, my child, tell the gentleman all you have learnt at the Misses * * *."

"We had reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, maps, the globe, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, astronomy, natural philosophy, chemistry,

botany, physiology, mineralogy, geology, and zoology in the morning ; and dancing, drawing, painting, French, Italian, Spanish, and German in the afternoon. Greek, and the higher branches of mathematics, were only studied by the *tall* girls."

"And how many masters were there for teaching all that?" demanded I, astonished with the volubility of the young lady's tongue.

"The Misses * * * teach *everything*," replied the girl. "They wouldn't allow a gentleman to enter the house."

"I know this to be a fact," interrupted the mother ; "and that's the reason their school is so popular. It is principally on the score of morality I sent Susan there. They have always as many girls as they want, and from the first families too ; — is n't it so, my dear ?"

"Just so, Ma," replied the young lady. "The first girls in New York are educated there ; they don't take everybody."

"I told you so," said the old lady. "It's

a great thing to send a girl there; and an expensive one too, I can assure you."

"And what is the usual age of the young ladies?" demanded I.

"They take them from the age of five to the age of eighteen," she replied; "it is only a month ago I left it myself."

"I just wanted to give her a little polish before taking her to Washington, where we are going to spend the next winter," interrupted her mother. "So I took her with me to New York, to let her see European manners. We reside in T* * *, rather a little out of the way of society."

"I am sure Ma is very kind," said Susan. "I don't know anybody in T* * *, nor do I *want* to know anybody there. I never associated with any but the New York girls at the Misses * * *; I was quite popular, and always belonged to their first sets."

"I am sure of that," said the mother. "Everybody that sees Susan likes her."

I put my hand upon my heart.

"I only trust to Heaven that she will marry

a gentleman capable of appreciating her education"—(here the young lady applied her handkerchief to her face, and appeared to be very much embarrassed,)—"and not a man without taste for literature or science, whom she could neither love nor respect, and who would be no *sort* of company to her."

I trusted her amiable daughter would never be so horribly deceived.

"And yet it is so difficult to judge of men in these times, especially in New York, where young men keep their knowledge as secret as their cash, and have generally credit for more than they are worth," interrupted my friend sympathisingly.

"Ah me!" sighed the old lady; "it did not use to be so when *my* husband was alive. There was not one girl out of ten of my acquaintance knew a word of Latin and mathematics; and yet they all married respectable men, who were no mathematicians either, and brought up their children in a right Christian manner. But they say this is the progress of education; and I do not wish my daughter to

be inferior to other girls. Boys don't cost half so much ; they learn everything they want at the counting-room."

"And what they learn there *sticks* to them as long as they live," added my friend.

Here mother and daughter were silent ; and my friend, seizing the opportunity, took my arm, and led me to another part of the room, where my companion of the dinner-table was sitting alone, reading "The Last Days of Pompeii."

"Ah !" exclaimed he, "always reading. Pray, how do you like Bulwer?"

"Not at all," replied she.

"Why then do you read him?"

"Everybody does so, and I don't want to be singular."

"But I should think you had independence enough not to read a book if you did not like it?"

"Why, I am sure it is not for want of independence I took it up ; but Bulwer is popular in England, and I would not give an English person the advantage of talking about a work I have not read myself."

“And is that the only reason? Do you take no pleasure in his novels?” demanded my friend with astonishment.

“None whatever, I assure you. I don’t like his maudlin sentiments. And, as for his prison heroes, I am too much of a matter-of-fact person to think the gallows romantic or poetical. I dare say Bulwer’s novels suit the sentimentality of the Germans; but to me they are a perfect dose. I dislike his description of passions,—his love-sick girls, dying with sentiment, and ready to run off with the first bearded biped that happens to strike their fancy. I think his novels are doing a vast deal of mischief in this country, *exposed as we are to the continual intrusion of foreigners.*”

“I am not quite sure,” replied my friend, “whether I am to take your remark as a compliment or a reflection. We Southerners are sometimes honoured with the title of ‘foreigners’ in the Northern States.”

“I do not speak of our own people,” rejoined the lady; “but I know several instances in which European adventurers have married into

our first families. Our girls seem to have an unaccountable passion for foreigners, especially if they happen to be noblemen. Have not several Polish refugees in this city married the daughters of some of our first merchants?"

"And what harm is there in that, if the Poles make good husbands, and prove themselves honourable men?" demanded my friend.

"Why, it's always such an experiment," she replied, "when one of our young ladies marries an European! People from the Old World entertain such different notions about women. Besides, a great many of our girls have been taken in: they expected to marry a prince, or at least a count, when their husbands turned out to have been strolling minstrels or dancing-masters. One of those unfortunate marriages was very nigh taking place the other day, and only prevented by the father of the young lady making a compromise with her admirer in the shape of a handsome sum of money. Another European Don Juan, who was flirting with every young lady in Boston,

was considered so dangerous a personage, that the respectable merchants of that city made a very handsome collection to get rid of him by shipping him back to Europe."

"And I heard that, having spent the money, he made them another visit to lay them under a fresh contribution," observed my friend.

"I believe that *was* the case," affirmed the lady; "and every Atlantic city is exposed to the same calamity. *If we could only tell the real nobleman from the impostor*, I should not care. I prefer, myself, the higher society of Europe to the business people of this country; but, lately, *Continental* noblemen have come in droves, and a greater set of beggars was never known in America. By the by, do you know what has become of that handsome Spanish marquis, who last year was so much the fashion in Philadelphia?"

"The Marquis de *** you mean? I lived with him for nearly three weeks without knowing his title: he is one of the most unassuming men I ever knew."

“And yet I can assure you he is a *real* marquis,” retorted the young lady. “Some of our people took a great deal of pains to ascertain the truth. He brought letters to Mr. * * *, and to the * * * Consul in Philadelphia; and they have written to Europe to learn all about his family. If every foreigner coming to this country were equally respectable, there would be no complaints about impostors; but our people are too easily taken in by high-sounding titles.”

“But do you know the marquis is poor? that he cannot at this moment realise a dollar from his estate?” demanded my friend.

“Ah, that is very unfortunate! poverty is *such* a drawback!”

“But he set out to make an honest living in the United States.”

“Not by teaching Spanish, I hope. Nothing can be more pitiable than the avocation of an instructor.”

“Indeed he was a long time resolved to do that; but, being a very handsome man, I was told no fashionable lady would intrust to him

the instruction of her daughter : so he cut the matter short by opening a fashionable boarding-house ; just the thing for him, you know ; he speaks half-a-dozen languages, and plays the piano equal to some of your first professors."

" O horror ! " exclaimed the young lady. " A marquis establishing a boarding-house ! If I had known that, I should not have mentioned his name. That must, of course, have thrown him at once out of society."

" I believe he had prudence enough to quit society before the latter had a chance to abandon *him*," observed my friend calmly.

The young lady made no reply, and was fortunately relieved from her embarrassment by another negro summons to téa, equally loud, though less potent in its consequences than that which had called us to dinner. I expected another rush to the dining-room, but was agreeably disappointed. Not a single gentleman made his appearance ; so that, with the exception of the two young ladies whom we had before had the honour of escorting, the

women were obliged to form into single file, which proceeded with the solemnity and slowness of a funeral procession.*

Arrived near the table, they took their seats in profound silence, and with such evident signs of exhaustion from fatigue, that I felt inclined to believe that they had not yet recovered from the exertion of the dinner. Nothing, indeed, can be more tiresome than a dinner at which one does not eat; it is equal to a ball at which one does not dance, or to a *conversazione* at which one is obliged merely to listen to the nonsense of others. I inquired what had become of the gentlemen? and was told that they had not yet returned from their counting-rooms,—that they hardly ever took tea, but were rarely absent from supper, which was sure to be put on the table at nine o'clock in the evening, in order to remain there till three or four in the morning. The gentlemen, moreover, I was informed, were so much in the

* In the larger boarding-houses in America, tea is not handed round, but served like a regular meal on the dining-table.

habit of eating oyster suppers early in the morning, in some of those innumerable subterraneous eating-houses and oyster-rooms which decorate the Park and other fashionable avenues of the city, that they did not “particularly care” about taking a cup of tea and a cold piece of meat at seven o’clock with the ladies. Dinner was quite a different concern, for which they were always ready to suffer some inconvenience.

The conversation at tea flagged from the very beginning; and it was easy to perceive that the ladies, being accustomed to make this meal the occasion of their regular confabulations, considered my and my friend’s company rather *de trop*. We therefore pleaded an appointment with some gentlemen, and, in the words of a French vaudevillist, “did them the pleasure of afflicting them with our departure.”

“What are you going to do with yourself this evening?” demanded my friend, as we were going towards the Astor House.

“I shall look into the Park-street theatre,”

replied I, “ and then spend the remainder of the evening at Mrs. * * *’s.”

“ Then I shall have the pleasure of being with you all the evening,” rejoined he. “ Mrs. * * *’s party will be one of the finest given this season.”

“ Which is perhaps not saying much for it, as the commercial difficulties of this year must necessarily interfere with all amusements of that sort.”

“ That does not follow,” observed my friend ; “ neither is it actually the case. Public amusements are going on as usual,—our theatres are well attended,—crowds of well-dressed people are nightly listening to good, bad, and indifferent concerts at Niblo’s garden,—horse-races are going on in fine style, and are this year surpassing all that is on record by the gentlemen of the turf,—there is the same quantity of champaign drunk as in former years;—in short, people seem to do as well with their ‘ shin-plasters’* as

* This part of my friend’s journal seems to have been written in the summer of the year 1837, when, shortly after

formerly with redeemable bank-notes. Our merchants are certainly the most extraordinary people in the world; and, if every other resource were to fail them, would not hesitate one moment, instead of payment, to take and offer drafts payable in the moon. That's what I call the genius of a mercantile community."

"And the way of keeping up appearances by credit."

"But the credit system enhances their profits more than in proportion to their liability to losses," remarked my friend; "and, besides, sharpens their wits, by obliging them to inquire into the character of those whom they trust."

"All this may be very well with regard to one merchant and another. Both find their remedy in the enlarged profits of the system; but the consumer is obliged to pay the advanced price of the merchandize. This is tax-

the suspension of specie payments, the country was flooded with small notes of 6½, 12½, and 25 cents, which were termed "shin-plasters."

ing the labouring classes for the defalcations of the traders. Besides, when a failure takes place, the merchant, who is more or less prepared for it, loses generally but a part of his profit; but, if the creditor be a mechanic, he loses the whole fruit of his labour."

"But the American merchants say, if it were not for the credit system, the labour of the mechanic would not command nearly so high a price."

"And I can assure you," said I, "that this is altogether an erroneous conclusion. The wages of the journeyman mechanic or the day-labourer, and the prices of the common necessities of life, are *not* in proportion to the credit of the merchants—but to the actual demand and supply. During all this trouble, and while the banks stopped specie payments, all sorts of provisions were unusually high, and so were all articles of manufacture. All that the credit system of your merchants can do consists in creating, *for a time*, an artificial demand, and thereby raising, for a short period, the price of a peculiar description of labour;

but, if you will take the pains of examining the history of American trade, you will find every such extraordinary price of labour soon after followed by a proportional depression, which could not but prove a greater disappointment to the workmen than would have been a regular succession of moderate prices."

"I said that the credit system favoured only *for a time* particular trades and occupations; because it is a well-known fact that the Americans seldom follow the same trade a great number of years. Let it be known that the cotton speculations of one or two individuals have been successful, and immediately half the merchants in the United States will commence speculating in cotton, until the trade is completely run down, and half the speculators reduced to bankruptcy. When, in the course of last year, twenty millions of dollars were to be raised on credit to pay for the purchase of public lands, what influence did *that* have on the industry of our working men, except that the diverting of a large portion of the capital

from which they received their emoluments, into a different channel, reduced the demand for, and consequently the value of, their industry? But even granting that the American credit system, which is said to act favourably with regard to the merchants, proves also a benefit to the small trader, the mechanic, and the farmer, would not the prosperity of the latter entirely depend on the former? and would not the extension or restriction of credit, which, with such a system, can always be effected by the rich capitalists, affect the demand and supply, and place the whole community at the mercy of a few individuals?"

"And what is the moral effect of the credit system on the sturdy husbandman or the mechanic? Instead of being sure of the price of his labour,—a surety without which the labouring classes of all countries lack the principal stimulus to exertion,—he sees his success in business reduced to a game of hazard; in which, like other gamblers, he often stakes his whole fortune on a single chance. Hence,

instead of adopting a course of rigid economy, he indulges in reckless expenditure, and a degree of luxury which sooner or later may prove the grave of the republican institutions of the country. For why should a man be saving, whose success depends, not on frugality, but on a 'successful hit'? and who, in a single speculation, may lose the savings of years?"

"That is a fact," observed my friend. "How many of the gentlemen that dined with us to-day do you think are possessed of real property? Not one-third of them. And yet they are all 'young, respectable merchants,' as a certain New York paper calls them, doing 'a handsome business' on a borrowed capital. You could see them again at the theatre, and, after that, dashing at some fashionable party, where they will talk of thousands as of mere bagatelles. And yet nothing acts so demoralizingly on a community as the insecurity or instability of property. I would rather see the United States 'progress slowly and steadily,' than, as they have done, by fits and starts,

with periods of commercial calamities, such as no European nation has felt under the yoke of the most odious tyrant."

"What's going on this evening?" demanded my friend of the box-keeper at the Park-street theatre. "I understand Forest has come back."

"Yes, sir; fresh from England."

"Is he to play this evening?"

"Here is the bill, sir. He is going to play Othello."

"Pretty full house?"

"I don't believe you will find a seat. There was a great rush for tickets this morning. The best boxes were sold at auction to the highest bidder."

With this piece of information we lost no time in seeking a place, and were fortunate enough to be able to squeeze ourselves into a box on the first tier, filled with little more than eighteen or nineteen people, most of whom seemed to belong to the first society. A stranger always feels agreeably surprised at

the neat arrangement of the interior of the Park-street theatre, whose outward appearance resembles much more a Dutch granary than a temple of the Muses. The first tier of boxes displayed, as usual, one of the choicest collections of fine women it had ever been my good fortune to behold in any part of the world: the effect of the second was scarcely inferior to that of the first: while the third, which in America, as in England, is almost exclusively reserved for those unfortunate wretches on whom society wreaks its vengeance for the commission of crimes in which the principal offender escapes but too frequently with impunity,—presented, as yet, nothing but empty benches. In a short time, however, these began to fill with such pale, sad, haggard-looking creatures as seemed to have escaped from Purgatory to seek a few moments' relief from their torments. Immediately above them was the gallery of the gods, which on this occasion, however, bore a much greater resemblance to the infernal regions, being studded with the grinning visages of negroes, the outlines of

whose sable countenances so completely intermingled with one another as to present but one huge black mass, from which the white of their eyes and teeth was shooting streaks of light like so many burning tapers from an ocean of darkness. The whole seemed to be a reversion of the unrivalled fiction of Dante,—the *angels* being *below*, and the *damned* occupying the *upper* regions,—as if it were the purpose of the Americans to invert even the order of the universe.

It was now very nearly seven o'clock; and the impatience of the audience began, very differently from that of Boston, to manifest itself by shrill whistles, loud screams and yells, and the beating of hands and canes. At last the orchestra, composed of very little more than twenty musicians, began to play something like an overture; which, however, was completely drowned in the noise from the pit and gallery, who seemed to look upon the musical prelude as an unnecessary delay of the drama. At last the music stopped, and, amid the loud acclamations of the people,

Enter *Roderigo* and *Iago*.

Roderigo.—"Tush ! never tell me ; I take it much unkindly
That thou, *Iago*, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this."

"Who plays *Iago*?" demanded a young lady in the box, addressing the gentleman behind her.

"Only one of our *ordinary Americans*," answered he. "We have not had a decent *Iago* since *Kemble* left us."

"I thought *Kemble* made an excellent *Cassio*," observed the lady.

"That he made indeed," replied the gentleman. "I never saw an actor perform the part of a tippler better than he did. It was perfectly natural to him."

"Yes," rejoined the lady ; "he could admirably perform the part of a tipsy *gentleman*, while *our* actors only play the part of a drunken blackguard. I think it ridiculous to go and see one of *Shakspeare's* plays performed on one of our stages. But they say *Forest* has much improved while in *England*, and that the first nobility went to see him."

“That ’s a fact,” ejaculated the gentleman ;
“I have seen it in the papers, or I should not
be here this evening.”

Iago.—“ And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof,
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds,
Christian and heathen, must be be-lee’d and calm’d
By debtor and creditor. This counter-caster,
He, in good time must his lieutenant be ;
And I (God bless the mark !) his moorship’s ancient !”

“Is it not singular,” observed a gentleman
right before us to his neighbour, “that Shak-
speare, who with the English passes for the
arch-inspector of human nature, should have
had so poor and erroneous an estimate of the
character of a merchant ? If an American
author were to bestow the opprobrious epithet
of ‘counter-caster’ on a member of that most
respectable part of our community, nothing
could save him from being Lynched.”

“The character of a merchant,” replied his
neighbour, “is decidedly one in which Shak-
speare was altogether unsuccessful. Take, for
instance, his ‘Merchant of Venice.’ What a
ludicrous caricature his Antonio is ! On the
one hand, the very paragon of prudence,—a

man, who in 'riskiness' would be outdone by the veriest Yankee shopkeeper ; while, on the other, he stakes his whole credit to aid the foolish adventures of a lover ! His merchant has no notion of banking ; for

‘ He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance.’ ”

“ And then becomes security for a friend,” added the first,—“ not merely by putting his name on the back of a bill, but by pledging his flesh ! How very improbable ! And then again consider his insolence to Shylock, of whom he wants to borrow money ; which is about as wise as if an American who wants credit were to insult Nic’las Biddle ! ”

“ All my sympathies in that play,” rejoined the second, “ are with the Jew ; who, after all, claimed nothing that was not lawful, and in every one of his speeches evinces more common sense than the Christian, who suffers his vessels to go to sea without having them insured.

‘ And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not,’ is a very good motto. The Jew is no fool, I tell you.”

“Quite a sensible man, that,” exclaimed a sharp-featured, long-headed, grey-eyed, raw-boned male figure who had taken his stand by the side of us, and had evidently overheard the severe critic: “if it were not for our *thrifty* merchants, I do not know *what* figure we should make in the world !”

Here the commentators on Shakspeare looked round and measured the pedlar (for such he was from his language and appearance), and then turned back again with a doubtful shrug of their shoulders, which had the effect of completely silencing the “Down-Easter.”

The momentary quiet produced by the cold rebuke of the gentlemen was soon taken advantage of by the ladies, who, engaging with each other in loud conversation, notwithstanding the cries of “Hold your tongues !” from the pit, gave the strongest possible proof of their fashionable indifference with regard to ordinary acting ; until, at last, the appearance of *Othello* silenced every voice with the universal roar of applause from the pit, boxes, and galleries. *Othello* bowed, the ladies observing “that he

had learned that in England." Fresh acclamations and plaudits, followed by renewed acknowledgments on the part of the actor; during which *Iago* finishes his speech, and gives the cue to *Othello*.

Othello.—" 'T is better as it is."

"After all, I do not see what the English people liked in Forest," observed a lady on the front seat. "I think him excessively clumsy."

"He is just the man to play the gladiator," replied her fair neighbour; "but I dare say he is the first English actor now living."

"Unquestionably," resumed the first. "How Macready must have been jealous of him!"

"And, in fact, every other English actor!" added the second. "You know the prejudices of John Bull with regard to America."

Othello.—"For know, Iago,
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
I would not my unhoused free condition
Put into circumscription, and confine,
For the sea's worth."

"A fine moral lesson, this, for our young

men that want to get married!" exclaimed an elderly lady, turning round to the gentleman behind her.

"You must not forget, ma'am, that he is but a negro," replied the gentleman.

"I don't like this play at all," rejoined the lady. "I think it immoral from beginning to end."

"And most unnatural too!" vociferated the gentleman. "A white woman to fall in love with a black man!"

"And the daughter of a senator too!" exclaimed the lady.

"It's preaching a regular amalgamation doctrine! The play ought not to be allowed to be performed before our negroes."

"But he was not a negro," exclaimed a young lady; "he was a Moor, Ma: there is an immense difference between these two races. I am sure no *lady* would fall in love with a negro."

"Or with anything that is coloured," added the elderly lady with dignity.

"If we stay in this box," observed my

friend, "we shall have no chance of listening to the performance. They are sure to make an abolition question of it. Let us seek a place elsewhere."

We accordingly scrambled out of our little prison, and, making the round of the tier, discovered two slips in a box not far from the stage, which was almost wholly occupied by gentlemen.

"It must be allowed after all," said the one; "Forest is the greatest actor America ever produced."

"An enthusiast," replied another, "who has encouraged the drama not only with his play, but also with his purse."

"By putting a prize on the best tragedy written in America; which, at any rate, is more than any of his patrons would have done on this side of the Atlantic."

"And then Forest is a self-taught man, who has never had any model to form himself after."

"And, besides," resumed the first, "he is a *modest* man, who seldom undertakes what he

is not equal to. It is for this reason he hesitated so long before he ventured to appear in one of Shakspeare's plays in England."

"And he did well to hesitate," replied another; "he appears to much greater advantage in one of our Indian dramas."

"Come," said the first, "none of your English prejudices, Tom! You seem to forget that Forest declined being run for representative in Congress; or, as *I* heard the story, that he *was* run and elected without his consent, and that he refused to take his seat."

"So would I have done in his place," rejoined Tom. "What man of talent would forsake a respectable position in society, in order to earn eight dollars a day in Washington by making or listening to dull speeches?"*

"With such notions about you, you had better go at once to England."

"That's what I am about to do. I shall sail in the next packet."

* Eight dollars a day is the pay of every member and senator in Congress.

“How long do you mean to stay in Europe?”

“As long as possible ; nothing but absolute necessity shall ever bring me back to this country.”

“Then it would be cruel to wish you a speedy return !”

(Tom took his hat, and left the box.)

Iago.—“Thou art sure of me ; go, make money.”

“*Iago* is no fool,” observed a gentleman, who, until now, had attentively listened to the play, struck with so sensible a remark.

“Nor *Othello* either,” replied another. “Forest must be worth upwards of a hundred thousand dollars. Do you know whether he has got any money by his wife?”

“I do not,” observed the former ; “but Forest is a sensible man, and so I rather think he has.”

“But he must have made a good deal of money in London. Do you know what his engagements were?”

“I have heard different accounts ; but he must have made money in *this* country.”

“How much do you think?”

“Fifty thousand dollars at least; and, now that he has succeeded in England, he will make a great deal more.”

“How much do you suppose he makes to-night?”

“Let us count the boxes, and I will tell you in an instant. Have you got a piece of paper and a lead pencil?”

“I won’t stay here either,” said my friend. “Let us see whether we cannot find a place up stairs. When these fellows once begin to talk about money, they are not likely soon to change their conversation: and, besides, I can only stay another act; I have a particular reason for being early at Mrs. * * *’s.”

I willingly consented to the proposition; and, the first act being over, accompanied my friend to the second tier of boxes. This time we took our seats among a set of people evidently “from the Western country,” from the natural sagacity of whose remarks my friend and I anticipated a great deal of amusement. They seemed to be in the best humour; and,

though somewhat noisy, (for they looked upon the theatre with little more deference than upon a public-house, and “upon the fun that’s going on there” in the light of “an election spree,”) enjoyed the play better than the people of fashion who had congregated to endorse the opinion of the British public. I had not, however, much time to listen to them, as I had promised to meet a friend at half-past eight; but the little I heard satisfied me that, much as they liked *Forest*, they loved *Rice* more,—the latter being, after all, “*the* real genuine nigger, the very bringing down of whose foot was worth the price of a ticket.”

CHAPTER V.

Description of an American Rout. — A Flirtation. — The Floor kept by the same Set of Dancers. — Fashionable Characters. — An Unfortunate Girl at a Party. — Inquiry instituted in her Behalf. — Anecdote of two Fashionable Young Ladies at Nahant. — Aristocratic Feelings of the Americans carried Abroad. — Anecdotes. — Reflections on the Manners of the Higher Classes. — Anecdotes illustrative of Western Politeness and Hospitality. — Kentucky Hospitality. — Hypocrisy of the Higher Orders of Americans. — Aristocracy in Churches. — An American Aristocrat compared to Shylock. — A Millionnaire. — Two Professional Men. — Stephen Gerard. — A Gentleman of Norman Extraction. — Different Methods resorted to for procuring Ancestors. — American and the English contrasted. — A Country Representative. — Method of making him desert his Principles. — Political Synonyms. — Contempt for Democracy. — Expectations of the American Aristocracy. — Objections to Waltzing. — Announcement of Supper.

“ Imperial Waltz ! imported from the Rhine,
 (Famed for the growth of pedigrees and wine),
 Long be thy import from all duty free,
 And hock itself be less esteem'd than thee !”

BYRON.

It was half-past ten when I made my appearance at Mrs. * * *’s “ rout.” The rooms

were richly decorated, and the company in excellent spirits. My friend had already arrived, and was talking to a young lady in one of the corners of the dancing-room ; which was called “ a desperate flirtation,” inasmuch as the young lady appeared to be past sixteen, and not yet twenty, and the gentleman in circumstances which enabled him to support a wife. Similar flirtations were going on in other parts of the room ; the married ladies being seated on benches or settees near the walls, and acting, if not as judges, at least as recorders of the events. The music, consisting chiefly of clarionets, flutes, and horns, was stationed to great advantage in the entry ; leaving not only more room for the dancers in the parlour, but softening also the harmony of sounds by the greater distance. The ladies, especially those who danced, were, in point of dress, the exact copies of the patterns issued weekly in the French metropolis ; and the gentlemen, though apparently timid in the presence of so many beauties, looked, nevertheless, sufficiently smart and enterprising for men of business.

I looked for a while on the group of dancers, in hopes of perceiving some slight variation, but was not a little annoyed by seeing continually the same figures and the same dancers. I afterwards communicated my surprise to my friend, but was told that I was in a fashionable house, in which none but fashionable young ladies and gentlemen could be expected "to have the floor;" and that if, from courtesy, some other people had been invited, it was expected they would have sufficient good sense not to obtrude themselves on the notice of the company, and least of all to make themselves conspicuous by joining in a quadrille or a waltz. "There are," added he, "some dozen of young girls here dying to show their 'steps,' but none of the fashionable young men would risk his standing in society by bringing them out; and, as for the young men of neither family nor wealth, who are only asked because they are relations of the house, (a custom which is by no means general in the United States,) they know their place too well to be guilty of such an impropriety.

“Whenever one of our wealthy stockholders,” continued he, “invites a poor devil to his house, the particular relation of entertainer and guest changes nothing in the relative position of the parties: the rich man still continues to assume the peculiar insolent condescension of a patron; while the man without credit will exhibit in his conduct the humiliating consciousness of his ‘insufficiency.’ If you took notice of the manner in which the lady of the house courtesied to the gentlemen that were presented to her, you must have been able to distinguish the capitalist from the poor beginner, or unsuccessful speculator, as effectually as if their property had been announced with their names. Every additional thousand produces a new smile; for it is impossible for our people to consider a man independently of his circumstances.”

“This,” observed I, “is the fault of every practical nation, especially of the English, who are the most purse-proud and exclusive people in Europe.”

“I know that,” replied he: “but the Eng-

lish reward talent of every description higher than any other nation in the world; so that money is, in a certain sense, the just measure of capacity. In America, on the contrary, there are but few branches of *industry*, and almost none of *learning*, which are sure of meeting with an adequate remuneration in money; so that, if men are merely judged by their wealth, the meanest bank or counting-house clerk, or a common shopkeeper, has a better chance of arriving at respectability than the most successful scholar in the most difficult branches of human learning. Society, in this manner, must become lower and lower every day; there being no entailed estates or large hereditary possessions in the United States, securing to a privileged class the necessary means and leisure for the gratuitous pursuit of arts and sciences. And, as for the English being exclusive, you forget that, when English people assume that character, they possess generally the tact and *à-plomb* necessary for carrying it off; whereas, here you often meet the same spirit among people whose wealth is

credit and *expectancy*, and whose manners and education are identified solely with the desk and ledger. Thus the terms 'patron' and 'client' are in New York, for instance, synonymous with 'creditor' and 'debtor;' and as the banks, according to the prevalent system of credit, must inevitably be the creditors of nine-tenths of the community, every person connected with them — and, above all, a stockholder, cashier, or president — must necessarily be a patrician. The whole composition of our society is arithmetical; each gentleman ranking according to the numerical index of his property. You need only watch the conduct of the society in this room, and you will satisfy yourself of the truth of my assertion.

"Do you know that lady in pink satin," he continued, "who is talking to the lady dressed in white, across that modest-looking woman with the pale face, who is evidently embarrassed by this rudeness?"

I replied in the negative.

"The first," he said, "is the daughter of

an honest shoemaker, who has become very rich by his industry, and is bitterly grieved by the aristocratic haughtiness of his daughter. I have heard it asserted that he often threatened her to hang up a last in his parlour, instead of a coat of arms, to punish the ridiculous pretensions of his family."

"Such a character," said I, "would have done credit to a Dutch burgomaster in the best times of the republic. But who is the lady thus planted between two of her sex, who are determined to take no more notice of her than if her chair were empty?"

"She is the wife of an American commodore," replied he; "one of the most gallant officers in the navy, who has shed his blood in his country's service. What further comment does this require? — what greater proof would you have of the insufferable arrogance of our moneyed aristocracy?"

"Let us follow that young lady, whose face I have never seen before in society," observed my friend after a short pause: "she looks as

though she had never been used to company, and will probably become the butt of the aristocratic misses who keep possession of the floor."

The unfortunate girl, led by a young man, who, to judge from his manners, was a stranger in the city, had scarcely entered the dancing-room before every eye was turned upon her, and the most insolent, half-loud inquiry instituted as to "who she was," and "where she came from?"

"Do you know that girl?" demanded a young lady, who had just stopped dancing, loud enough for her to hear.

"I never saw her before in my life, *I* am sure," replied the *ballerina* who had been addressed, with a toss of her head; "do *you* know her?"

"Indeed I don't; I wonder how she got here!" resumed the first.

Here a third lady walked up, and examined the dress of the stranger; then, joining a small circle, "I am sure," said she, in an

audible whisper, "it's not worth seventy-five cents a yard."

"And who is that unlicked cub that's with her?" demanded another lady.

"Heaven alone knows!" answered a voice; "I dare say, just come from the woods!"

"With his mouth full of tobacco!"

"I hope she is n't going to dance; if she does, I shall leave the room."

"I sha'n't stay either."

One half of this conversation the poor girl must have heard, as she was standing close to the speakers, and could not even escape from the sting of their remarks through the crowd that obstructed the passage; for it is the custom in America, as in England, for people who give parties to invite as many persons as possible, in order to have the satisfaction of a full room. She was on the point of bursting into tears; and yet the young, fashionable tigresses, of from sixteen to twenty years of age, had not feeling enough to take pity on her. I am aware that, in describing that of which I was an eye-witness, I shall scarcely be be-

lieved by my English or German readers, because it is almost impossible for an educated European to conceive the degree of rudeness, insolence, and effrontery, and the total want of consideration for the feelings of others, which I have often seen practised in what is called the “first society” of the United States. I have seen in Boston, or rather in Nahant, a small watering-place in the neighbourhood of that city, two girls,—one the daughter of a president of an insurance-office, and the other the child of a merchant,—supporting their heads with their elbows, and in this position staring at each other for several minutes across a public table; each believing that her standing in society entitled her to the longest stare, and that the other, being the daughter of a man of less consideration and property, should have modesty enough to cast down her eyes.

The same kind of feelings the Americans carry even across the Atlantic. In Paris, Florence, Rome, and other places on the Continent, (in England they have no particular practice of their own, but merely follow in

the wake of the nobility,) they form as many distinct sets and coteries as at home; imitating, by degrees, every ridiculous fashion of France and Italy, and endeavouring by their wealth to pave the road to the highest society, and to keep from it the less fortunate part of their countrymen. Two instances of this kind came to my personal knowledge.

About three years ago, while a friend of mine happened to be in Vienna, he met at Mr. S * * 's, the United States' consul, a party of Americans, composed of a number of gentlemen and ladies from Boston, Baltimore, and South Carolina. The conversation ran on different topics, until one of the company introduced in his remarks the names of some fashionable people of Boston with whom he professed to be acquainted. Upon this, Mr. * * *, descended from one of the wealthiest and most vulgar aristocratic families of that place, and who pretended to know "everybody," whispered something into the consul's ear, and requested him to step with him into the next room. There, as my friend after-

wards learned, he assumed at once the rank and office of grand inquisitor; cross-examining the poor consul as to "where he had picked up that man?" and declaring finally that he must be an impostor, as *he* did not know him, nor *ever heard his name mentioned before*, (this is the usual phrase employed by "respectable" Americans when they wish to repudiate a person as not belonging to their set). After he had thus discharged the duties of a high-born citizen, he resumed his seat at a little distance from "the impostor," and remained silent for the rest of the evening. Poor Mr. * * *, who was really a gentleman of slender means, could not but perceive the prejudice which his fellow-townsmen had excited in the mind of his hospitable entertainer, and soon afterwards left the company.

Another instance of this kind occurred at Munich between two Americans; one a regular resident of the place for many years, and the other a traveller, who imagined he had held a higher rank in America than his compatriot. The latter, of course, immedi-

ately set out to communicate his scruple to the consul, and the *attachés* of the * * * legation; assuring them that the gentleman they had taken into favour was neither a scholar nor a man of high standing, and was consequently not entitled to their attention. All this was done while the other person was absent from town, and for no other purpose than impressing the society of Munich with the fact "that there is a great deal of aristocracy in America, and that he himself was one of its noblest representatives." The American ministers in London, Paris, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, and the consuls in the different commercial cities of Europe, are usually made the repositories of all the slander which one set or *coterie* may have in store against the other; and, as no peculiar discretion is exercised by Americans in the treatment of high public functionaries, the latter themselves do not often escape uninjured, the public press furnishing the meanest scribbler with the means of wreaking his vengeance.

The fact is, the *soi-disant* higher classes of

Americans, in quitting the simple, manly, moral, industrious habits of the great mass of the people, — habits which alone have won them the respect of the world, — have no fixed standard by which to govern their actions, either with regard to themselves or their fellow beings; no manners, customs, modes of thinking, &c. of their own; no community of feelings; nothing which could mark them as a distinct class, except their contempt for the lower classes, and their dislike of their own country. How should such an order of beings agree amongst themselves? How should they be able to make themselves, or those around them, comfortable? There is more courtesy in the apparent rudeness of the Western settler than in the assumed politeness of the city stockholder, — more true hospitality in the log-house of the backwoodsman, than in any of the mansions of the presidents and directors of banks with whom it has been my good fortune to become acquainted.

I remember, some years ago, when travelling with a distant relative on the borders of

the Mississippi, to have been approaching the habitation of a farmer, whom, in company with his wife, we found on horseback, ready to set out on a journey to the next market town for the purpose of buying stores for his family. There was no tavern or resting-place within seven miles of us; but, not wishing to intrude upon their domestic arrangements, we passed the house and doubled our speed, in order to be in time for dinner at the next village. The farmer, however, did not suffer us to continue our journey without having refreshed ourselves at his house; and, persuading us to come back, he and his wife dismounted, and assisted in preparing and ordering everything necessary for dinner. We of course protested against their putting themselves to so much trouble for the sake of strangers, who, in an hour or so, might have reached a place where they could have procured a dinner for money. "Oh, I assure you, gentlemen," replied our entertainer, "I never suffer myself or my wife to be *troubled* either by strangers or friends; we merely dis-

charge our duty, without either inconvenience to ourselves, or putting others under any sort of obligation. Lucy!" said he to a buxom girl that was playing with one of the prettiest children I ever beheld, "you will see that the gentlemen want nothing. Eliza! we must be off, or we shall not get thither till dark. Good morning, gentlemen!"—"Good-b'ye, gentlemen!" added his wife; both mounting their horses, and leaving us to enjoy ourselves and our dinner as best we might.

What a picture of sincerity, honesty, confidence, frankness, and unostentatious hospitality is this, compared to the formal invitations to dinner, or a party, of one of the nabobs in the Atlantic cities! Take, for instance, the case of a rich man in New York. He prepares a week beforehand, and racks his brains as to what people he shall invite that will do credit to his house, and what persons he may safely exclude without injury to himself, and without offending them past reparation. He has one dinner-party for one set of acquaintance, and

another for another. At the one he will act as host, at the other as patron ; the expense being in both cases proportionate to the rank of his guests. Who under these circumstances would not rather prefer the hospitality of the honest Kentuckian, whose Western friends averred that he was truly kind, “ for, when he had company, he simply went to the side-board, poured out his glass, and then turned his back upon them, not wishing to see how *they filled?*”

The fashionable people of the Atlantic cities, who give dinner and evening parties either for the purpose of maintaining or acquiring a high rank in society, have themselves little or no disposition for company. With them society does not offer an agreeable and necessary respite from toil ; but is merely a means of acquiring influence, &c. For this purpose it is not necessary to treat all persons with equal sincerity and politeness. “ *La politesse nous tient lieu du cœur,*” say the French ; but the fashionable people of the United States manage to get on without either. There is nothing in

the composition of a fashionable American to compensate for the loss of natural affections,—nothing in his manner to soften the egotism which manifests itself in every motion, every gesture, every word which drops from his lips. And the worst of it is, that he imagines all this to be a successful imitation of English manners! He forgets entirely that, in imitating the manners of the higher classes in England, he is very much in the position of a sailor on horseback; showing by his whole carriage that he is out of his element, and, though straining every nerve to maintain his place, ready to tumble off at the first motion for which he is not previously prepared.

As regards the exclusiveness of the higher classes, and especially of the women, the instance before me was certainly one calculated to excite my indignation, had I not known fashionable young ladies that refused to walk in the streets of Philadelphia until the dinner-hour of “the common people,” when they would be sure of having the side-walk to themselves.

But what is all this, compared to the artificial distinctions introduced into their churches? It has always been the pride of the Catholic church in Europe to offer a place of worship to every man, without distinction of rank, title, or wealth. The utmost a man pays for a chair in any of the churches of France or Italy is one *sou*; the fashionable American Catholics, however, imitate the practice of those gentlemanly followers of Christ who choose to worship God in good company. Thus the respectable Catholics of New York, "who do not wish to be annoyed by the presence of an Irish mob," being for the most part composed of their own servants, have built a church for their own specific use,—a snug little concern, just large enough for a *genteel* audience to hear the Lord *en famille*.

In order to exclude effectually everything that might be disagreeable, no one is allowed to stand in the aisles; so that those poor devils who cannot afford to pay for a pew must be content to seek the Lord elsewhere *among their equals*. On the whole, the principles which

govern the aristocracy of the Northern States of America are the very counterpart of the sound maxims of Shylock with regard to the vulgar herd of Christians. "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you," (here might be added, *electioneer* with you,) "and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, or pray with you."

"Come!" said my friend, "what are you reflecting about? Do not look any longer on this tender victim of fashionable society. She is now but serving her apprenticeship; but will soon rise to the rank of 'an ancient' in the clique, and then treat every new-comer in precisely the same manner she is treated now. Let me rather make you acquainted with some of the lions that grace Mrs. * * * 's party. Do you know that gentleman with grey hair standing in the corner? It is Mr. * * *, originally of German extraction, who has changed his name in order to warrant the supposition of his being descended from a Norman family. He is a great public speaker,—that is, he speaks on all occasions; and has assured his

party, who of course look upon democracy as the greatest curse of the country, that his father was a respectable man long before Tamany Hall* was built. This declaration, no doubt, secures to him the *entrée* of the first society ; and, if he do not fail in business, the consideration of one of the oldest aristocrats of the city.

“A little further from him, on the right,” continued he, “you will notice a gentleman with a white cravat. He has always a little *clientelle* around him, for he is a *millionnaire*, descended from a *millionnaire* ! I know very little of him or his father, except that the latter has made his money by successful speculations and great saving,—two poetical circumstances worthy of being immortalized by Washington Irving. Behind him is stationed Mr. * * *, a gentleman of great business tact, who writes his letters on the backs of those which he receives ; and is always particular in advising his friends with whom he has dealings

* The great rendezvous and head-quarters of the democrats of the city of New York.

to get his name on a piece of paper. He is a silent partner in half-a-dozen different concerns, and has the reputation of obstinately refusing in all cases to receive less than a hundred cents on a dollar.

“In the other corner of the room you will observe two gentlemen engaged in conversation with a lady, who is evidently tired of their attention. They are, as you might guess from this circumstance, nothing but ordinary professional men, whose daily earnings are just sufficient to keep them above water. They are merely invited from charity, being distant relations of the lady of the house, who, by showing them up, expects to improve their chance of success in business. One is a lawyer with a small practice; and the other a physician, who, as he cannot afford to keep a horse and gig, has as yet but little to do, but will undoubtedly succeed in obtaining a large practice if he should be successful in his attentions to Miss * * *, a nice young girl of thirty-two, with plenty of money to set up a carriage.”

“But,” said I, more than dissatisfied with

my friend's satirical remarks, "how do you explain the generosity which some of the wealthiest citizens in this country manifest towards the poor, and especially to all charitable institutions?"

"There is," replied he, "a sort of *public* generosity among the rich men in our Atlantic cities which delights in making donations to public institutions of all kinds; but woe to those who have private transactions with them !

"The public in America is always courted, even by the mushroom aristocracy of New York. Stephen Gerard, who by the moneyed men of the United States was considered as the quintessence of science and virtue, so that a salutation 'Go and do as Stephen Gerard !' would at any time have been equivalent to the '*Vaya Usted con Dios !*' of the Spaniards,—Stephen Gerard himself, I say, was obliged to give away money to the poor, even during his lifetime !

"Besides, there is a good deal of satisfaction in giving away money to the public, in a public

way, in a country in which the public is sovereign. It is a way of ingratiating one's-self with one's master, and of acquiring notoriety and credit for wealth, and thereby an indisputable claim to the highest respectability. When, in one of our Atlantic cities, it is once known that a man is rich, that 'he is very rich,' that he is 'amazingly rich,' that he is 'one of the richest men in the country,' that he is 'worth a million of dollars,' that he is 'as rich as Stephen Gerard, or John Jacob * * *,' the whole vocabulary of praise is exhausted; and the individual in question is as effectually canonized as the best Catholic saint.

"I often alluded to this species of money-worship, when alone with my Northern friends; but they seemed to be surprised with the simplicity of my remarks. They saw nothing in it that was not perfectly commendable by common sense. 'We imitate the English in that respect, as in every other,' was their excuse; 'and, as is usual with us, *improve* upon them. We do not think John Bull understands the value of money as well as ourselves; at least,

he does not turn it to so good an account. All that can be said against us is, that we do not value *other things* as highly as we ought to do ;' and with this species of logic they seemed to be satisfied. But let us continue our tour.

“Do you observe that gentleman in tights, with large black whiskers? He is one of the most fashionable and aristocratic gentlemen in the city. I believe he served his apprenticeship in a baker's shop, then went into an auction-room, then became a partner in the firm, and lastly took a house in Broadway, set up a carriage, and declared himself a gentleman. Nine-tenths of all the people that are called ‘fashionable’ in New York have had a similar beginning ; and yet, if you listen to their conversation, you would swear they are descended in a direct line from William the Conqueror.

“No people on earth are more proud of their ancestors than those fashionable Americans who can prove themselves descended from respectable fathers and grandfathers. Take, for instance, the case of one of my young

friends, who was sent to Europe by his family for the sole purpose of discovering his ancestors ; or that of an acquaintance of mine in Boston, who has found a signet among the rubbish of his household, and now swears that it belonged to his great-grandfather, there being no other person to claim it ; or that of Mr. * * *, seated yonder by the side of that elderly lady, who has bought a lot of Dutch portraits in Europe,—all knights in armour,—in order to form a whole gallery of ancestors ; or that of Mr. * * *, who has discovered some faint analogy between *his* name and that of a certain animal, which he now uses as a coat of arms ; and a hundred other examples I could quote.”

“The sâme ridiculous folly,” interrupted I, “you will find in England, and especially in Scotland, among the gentlefolks.”

“But then,” interrupted my friend, “the English do not pretend to be *republicans* ; they never formally banished nobility and royalty from their country in order to rake them up again from the rubbish of another world ; and

the particular genius of their institutions is not opposed to any real distinction in the way of family. Our people, on the contrary, are obliged publicly to repudiate what they are most anxiously striving to assert in private; and thus to add hypocrisy to pretensions for which there is not the least apology in the history of their country. But I must direct your attention to that portly-looking gentleman in blue pantaloons, who, in my opinion, is by far the most remarkable personage of the whole company. He wears boots; and his hat and gloves, neither of which can be said to be entirely new, are carefully deposited in the entry. Thus unencumbered, he will play one of the best knives and forks at supper; although the lady of the house herself will take his arm, and put him to his utmost good breeding. She completely monopolises his conversation, and distinguishes him from the crowd by the most studied politeness."

"But what can be the cause of her attention?" demanded I; "is he so very rich?"

"Not exactly," replied he; "he is *barely respectable*."

“What do you mean by that?”

“I mean, in the language of New York, he is a man of moderate property.”

“Then I do not see the object of her civility to him.”

“She has indeed a different object from what you or any other stranger would suspect. The gentleman is a country representative of considerable talent; of whom the lady, who, like most of the nice women in this city, is in the opposition, wishes to make a convert. A good many unsuspecting ‘members of the assembly’ are spoiled by our fashionable women; for the spirit of gallantry is stronger in our yeomanry than among our aristocratic gentlemen of the town. Our country representatives can argue for years, and argue well, against the attempted usurpations of certain coteries of gentlemen; but they cannot take up the cudgel against the ladies. It is in the best society where our members learn to listen to the grossest abuse of the institutions of their country without glowing with indignation or resentment; it is there where they study patience in hearing the

people's favourites traduced as 'scoundrels,' 'villains,' 'pickpockets,' 'idiots,' 'fools,' &c.; and it is in company of fashionable ladies that they learn to consider patriotism as unbecoming a gentleman,—as a vice which ought never to infect but the lowest orders of society.

“And it is principally because their patriotism cannot be translated into an attachment to some ‘great and glorious personage’ that these poor devils of representatives, who would have remained honest if they had not been admitted into good society, become, by degrees, ashamed of everything which is their own, from their heads down to the very soles of their feet. At first they are made aware that they are not so refined as some of the New York people, especially those who have been in Europe; and that, in order to get rid of some of their boorish manners, they must needs try to get into good society. Some neutral friend procures them an introduction, and the women do the rest.

“One of the principal things they learn in

good society is, to consider politics as wholly uninteresting except to tavern-keepers on election days; as a subject unworthy of the pursuit of a gentleman, and a thing banished from people of fashion and good taste. When they speak of it, or allude to it, accidentally in conversation, the good-natured condescending smiles of the company convince them, without argument, that they have been guilty of some impropriety. When they grow warm at the mention of their country, the calmness of all around them teaches them the absurdity of betraying emotion on so ordinary an occasion; and, if they should ever by chance make use of the words ‘liberty,’ ‘right,’ ‘independence,’ or forget themselves so far as to introduce ‘the people,’ they are left alone to enjoy these things by themselves.

“When, by this course of instruction, they have amended their manners so far as no longer to be guilty of similar *gaucheries*, they are made to improve their language, to smooth down the roughness of terms by the substitution of more agreeable and palatable synonyms,

and to set a right value on certain expressions altogether unintelligible to the great mass of the people.

“ Thus the word ‘ patriotism,’ as I told you before, is entirely proscribed by the higher classes; they designate that virtue by ‘ political zeal,’ and the patriot himself by ‘ a successful politician.’ ‘ A popular candidate for office’ is equivalent to ‘ a vagabond who has no business of his own;’ ‘ popularity’ means ‘ the approbation of the mob;’ and ‘ popular distinction,’ ‘ notoriety in vulgar pursuits.’ ‘ A public man’ is ‘ an individual lost to society and to all its virtues;’ the term ‘ liberty’ is synonymous with ‘ licence of the mob;’ and ‘ universal suffrage’ stands for ‘ universal blackguardism.’

“ It is to be observed, however, that all these significations apply only to the members of the *democratic* party; there never having been a single man of fortune, in any of the Northern States, whose patriotic intentions have once been made the subject of doubt or inquiry: for it is easily understood why a man

of property should be attached to his country ; but the poor man has *no right* to be so, and is therefore to be justly suspected whenever he takes an interest in politics.

“ Under these circumstances, you cannot wonder at our aspiring people — and where is the man in this country that is *not* so?—deprecating the idea of being called ‘ democrats,’ and the influence which ‘ good breeding and fashionable society’ exercise on our professional politicians. The gentleman I pointed out to you is just serving his apprenticeship in the fashionable *salons* of New York ; and there are already heavy bets making on his being brought over to the opposition in less than a year. I have heard it said that he was a ‘rank’ democrat when he first came to New York, but that the ladies have already tamed him so far as to make him less *positive* in his opinions ; and they hope, by the time they will teach him to wear white gloves and ‘behave himself like a gentleman,’ to make him altogether ‘harmless.’

“ When once come to that, it takes but

very little to make him *ashamed* of serving the ‘riff-raff,’ and declare in favour of those dignified opinions which are handed down to the Americans by the ablest writers of Great Britain, and which the commercial aristocracy of the United States apply to themselves in precisely the same manner as the nobility of England. He is then likely to perceive ‘the *beauty* of those British institutions’ which ensure the complete submission of the lower classes to the *superior* orders,—‘which assign to every man his proper place,’—which ‘teach the servants to be respectful to their masters,’ &c. The admiration of England and of the British government naturally begets a wish to establish, in America, a government after the British model; for, in the same manner as the honest Boston baker wished his native town to be raised to the rank of a city, in order that at some future day it might rival ‘the ancient and famous city of London,’ do our stockholders and stock-jobbers expect to become ‘ancient and far-famed families’ in ‘the great American empire,’ and to outshine the bright-

est stars in the galaxy of the British nobility."

"And yet," observed I, "there are very few aristocratic Americans who think America capable of national elevation. 'We have gained nothing by our independence of Great Britain,' said a fashionable and learned Bostonian, when the subject was started in the way of a national boast; "on the contrary, we have lost in personal consideration."

"And I have not the least doubt he spoke the truth, as far as *related to himself*," replied my friend. "Nothing can better prove the corrupting influence of our fashions," he continued, "than the fact that most of the celebrated leaders of the present opposition have commenced their career by advocating democracy, and finished by betraying it. This is the price they have to pay for admission into good society, from which democrats are naturally excluded."

Here my friend was interrupted by the approach of the gentleman of the house, who, in the most polite manner possible, in-

quired whether we were entertained with the party.

“How could that be otherwise?” replied my friend; “I have never before seen such a collection of pretty girls; I wish I could see them all dance.”

“The room is not large enough for that,” said our entertainer, little suspecting the meaning of my friend; “but next year I shall take another house, and then there will be no more complaints of that sort.”

“With a little forbearance, a good many of those beautiful sylphs could dance in *this* room.”

“Quite a gallant speech that!” exclaimed the old gentleman: “one can see that you come from the South.”

“There is nothing gives me more pleasure than to see young ladies amuse themselves.”

“Just so, sir,—just so! only I cannot get reconciled to the *walse*.”

“And I,” observed my friend, “think the *waltz* the finest dance in the world.”

“ Why, it may do tol—er—ably well for *some* folks; but I have strong doubts of its being an appropriate dance in this country.”

“ And why that?”

“ I shall tell you that in a moment,” said the old gentleman.

“ You see, sir, that our young ladies are very fond of dancing; and that, when once commencing, they are sure to go on the whole evening. Well, sir, they take a partner,—a young fellow who is quite as fond of dancing as they are, — and then they dance, or *waltz*, as you call it, round and round, until they both get as warm as possible; and then, sir——”

“ And then, sir——”

“ Why, then they go into a cold room, or into the open air, and catch cold; that’s all. ’T is but a week ago that my daughter recovered from a severe cough. These, sir, are the fatal consequences of that dance amongst us; and that’s the reason I don’t like

it. It is not adapted to our climate. Am I not right, sir ? ”

“ Perfectly,” replied my friend.

“ Health before everything ; that’s my motto. But there is no use in preaching to those girls ; they *will* have their own way in everything.”

“ But you seem to forget that waltzing is becoming more and more the fashion in England.”

“ Is that really the case ? ” demanded the old gentleman ; “ then it cannot be so bad after all,—the English have pretty good notions on all such subjects,—if our girls would only take care of their health.”

Here the conversation was interrupted by a sudden rush of the company, occasioned by the announcement of supper. At this important summons, ladies and gentlemen, the wife of our entertainer with the pantalooned country representative at their head, were pairing off in great haste, to shape their course down to a large room on the ground-floor, which during the first part of the evening had been

kept carefully closed, but was now thrown open for the more substantial amusement of the party. This, however, is too important a subject to be treated as a mere episode: it deserves a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

A German Dissertation on Eating.—Application of Eating to Scientific, Moral, and Political Purposes.—Democrats in America not in the Habit of entertaining People.—Consequences of this Mistake.—The Supper.—Dialogue between a Country Representative and a Fashionable Lady.—Mode of winning Country Members.—Hatred of the Higher Classes of everything belonging to Democracy.—Attachment of the Old Families to England.—Hatred of the “Vulgar English.”—The French, and even the English, not sufficiently aristocratic for the Americans.—Generosity of the Americans towards England.—A Fashionable Young Lady.—An American Exquisite.—Middle-aged Gentlemen and Ladies.—Americans not understanding how to amuse themselves, because they do not know how to laugh.—Negroes the happiest People in the United States.—Breaking-up of the Party.—Gallantry of the Gentlemen.

Silence.—“Ah, sirrah ! quoth-a, we shall

Do nothing but eat and make good cheer,
And praise Heaven for the merry year.”

Second Part of King Henry IV. Act V. Scene 3.

GERMANS are by English writers accused of heaviness of style and laborious dulness ; pro-

duced partly by their predilection for metaphysics, and partly by their inclination towards mysticism. *Martinus Scriblerus* was born at Munster; and, although a German* has since actually discovered the *materia subtilis* ridiculed by Pope, the prejudices of the practical philosophers of England, and in later days of America, remain still as strong against them as ever. Every one, I believe, is willing to concede to them the greatest quantity of abstract learning; very few will give them credit for practical knowledge, and a nice appreciation of the good things of this life. I remember being once told by an Englishman that he did not think it possible for a German to tell the difference between mutton and lamb, inasmuch as both were served up in little bits at the best private tables in Germany. Such a remark offered to a Frenchman would have made his blood boil with rage, and probably have ended in a duel; but *I* resolved upon taking a German vengeance, and proposed writing a small disser-

* Mr. Encke of Berlin.

tation on the origin, progress, and various applications of eating to scientific, sociable, and political purposes.

Eating, according to the oldest and best records, was invented in Paradise,—where we have strong reasons to suppose it constituted the principal amusement of the first man. From this we may safely infer that it was necessary to *primitive* happiness; although, from a singular perversity of taste, dinners then consisted merely of desserts,—that is, of a choice variety of raw fruit: the chemical process of cooking, the scientific arrangement by which thinking man assimilates and subjects the universe to his own body, was reserved for subsequent periods. The first sin was an *appetite* for knowledge,—the latter being communicated by the simple process of eating; which fact is still commemorated, in the shape of regular anniversary dinners, by most of the learned societies in England and on the Continent.

But eating was not long confined to learning; it extended itself gradually to all other

human pursuits, and, in course of time, associated itself with politics, morals, and even religion. The Christian Protestant religion is the only one which does not prescribe a particular diet; and I have heard it asserted in Frankfort-on-the-Maine, (a place where Jews are better known than anywhere else,) that an Israelite may be considered as converted from the moment he has tasted roast pork. With regard to morality, every one knows the influence of a man's diet on his passions, and how often mildness and amiability of disposition are chiefly the result of a particular regimen.

With regard to the fine arts, it has been observed by a celebrated French professor of gastronomy, and with great justice too, that we borrow the whole nomenclature from the taste,—that is, from the palate. What would be tragedy or comedy without the words “bitter,” “sour,” “sweet,” “mild,” &c.?—where would be your “sweet-hearts, your sweet faces, sweet voices, and sweet dispositions?” And again, what would become of your “sour dis-

positions," your "bitter disappointments," and "galling vexations?" The strongest and most lasting impressions are produced by the palate,—that is, by eating; and hence poets and common people refer to them more frequently than to the sensations conveyed by the other senses. "The pleasures of the palate," says the French philosopher, "are the most lasting, and compensate us in our old age for the loss of nearly every other enjoyment."

But the most important influence of eating is exhibited in politics. Here we observe, in the first place, the fact that a substantial diet in a people is, with scarcely one exception inseparable from a certain degree of rational freedom. It is for this reason principally that the nations of the North are with great difficulty reduced to slavery; while the South, more abstemious in eating, has always been more easily conquered and subdued. This rule, however, I can assure my readers, does not apply to the Southern States of America, whose gallant inhabitants are as much used to turtle as any alderman of the city of London,

and as loyal as any British subject whenever they are called upon to fire a “royal salute,” or, in other words, “empty twenty-seven bumpers of madeira,” in honour of any of their celebrated public characters. As a general rule, however, it may be remarked that beef and mutton countries are the most difficult to be governed, or rather that the people of those countries are more capable of governing *themselves* than any other; and that a nation becomes fit for a democratic or *self*-government in exactly the same proportion as its diet consists principally of meat.

With the knowledge of these facts, I would direct the attention of travellers in the United States to the *stereotype* bills of fare they will find in nearly all the principal public houses; which, in my opinion, will best enable them to form a correct estimate of the republican sentiments of the Americans. As far as my experience goes, they all run thus:—

“Roast beef, roast mutton, roast lamb, roast veal, roast pork, roast pig, roast turkey, roast goose, roast chickens, roast pigeons, roast

ducks," &c. To which, merely by way of appendix, are added the comparatively insignificant items of "pudding, pastry, and dessert."

For these, however, nobody cares; but the roasts generally go off well, constituting both the pith and luxury of an American table. A few aristocratic innovations on this rule have, indeed, been attempted by the keepers of some of the crack boarding-houses and hotels; but they were soon obliged to come back to the old standard of beef and mutton. Even at private parties the roasts form the principal ornament of the table; though, of late, some fashionable people, preceded by the *** minister in Washington, have attempted, though in vain, to popularize the taste for "*pâtés au foie gras*" and "*aux truffes*."

The Americans eat *cold* roast meat four times a day, viz. at breakfast, lunch, tea, and supper; and *hot* roast beef or mutton twice, at breakfast and dinner:—hence, in spite of all the manœuvres of the Whig

and Bank party in the United States to overthrow the democratic principles established by Jefferson, Jackson, and Van Buren, the latter have always prevailed, in the same manner as the quantity of beef consumed exceeded that of all other roast and boiled meats taken together. This correspondence between a man's food and political principles was beautifully illustrated by the late Dr. Johnson, when, in his reply to the American ditty,—

“Who rules o'er freemen must himself be free,” he sensibly remarked,—

“Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat.” That *impromptu* alone was worth three hundred a-year.

The use of *public dinners* in a free country I need not dwell upon; every one knows that they are the most powerful *stimulus* to patriotism and virtue. It is only after dinner that gentlemen can be supposed to listen patiently to a long political argument, intended to prove their antagonists to be arrant knaves, and their partisans men of sound public principles. Calumny and eulogy are the necessary dessert

of a public meal,—a sort of *confiture* taken after the appetite for solid food has been appeased in a more satisfactory manner.

Dinners and suppers are also made use of for the purposes of *diplomacy*; or, as is the case in the United States and in England, for making political proselytes. Napoleon, used to conquest, knew yet the value of good dinners. Instead of repeating the rules and maxims laid down by Machiavelli for a young prince, — instead of echoing the vile saying of Richelieu, “*Dissimuler, c’est regner*,”—he gave to his parting ministers no other injunctions than “*Tenez bonne table, et soignez les femmes*.”

A whole world lies in this injunction! “*Tenez bonne table*” precedes the command “*Soignez les femmes* ;” a proof that he considered the latter, if not impossible, at least useless, without the former.

Talleyrand added to his political sagacity the most perfect appreciation of good eating; both qualities being absolutely indispensable to an ambassador. The compliment he paid to the

English, “ that he never knew what French cooking was until he came to England,” may be considered at once as a proof of his diplomatic wisdom and taste. Count A——y, who keeps the diplomatic crack house in Paris, maintains his influence with all parties by the most tasteful entertainments; and it is generally believed that Count P——o di B——o’s cook has as much contributed to the widespread reputation of his master, as the consummate talents with which the latter has managed the interests of his sovereign. Lord P——, as we are assured by a most able writer in one of the best periodicals of the present day, has a winning way of conciliating Tory ladies with Whig dinners: and if Lord M——ne is less successful in this most important art of a minister, it is, I am quite sure, because he prefers dining out to entertaining his friends at home; a practice for which no public man was ever pardoned in any country.

In a similar manner is eating made a means of making political converts in the United

States; but with the exception of two or three wealthy families in Philadelphia, and half-a-dozen of the same kind in New York and Baltimore, the *democrats* are not in the habit of entertaining people; (in England, according to the most respectable testimony, the Whig lords entertain more than the Tories;) and it is on this account, principally, that their case seems to be hopeless—in good society. In the Western States there is a great deal of “treating” among the “republicans;” but the honour of giving regular dinner-parties and hot suppers belongs almost exclusively to “the aristocracy.”

These dinners and suppers are given to public men as a sort of “*douceur*” for their honourable conduct; but, once accused of democracy, it’s “no song, no supper.” The higher classes of Americans apply the same method by which beasts are tamed and tutored, to the representatives of the people; they feed them when they behave well, and kick at them when they show themselves self-willed and disobedient. In a few instances some of the government

officers in Boston and Philadelphia gave parties, at which there was a profusion of iced champaign and chicken-salad; and the thing went off well enough: the Whigs, *alias* Tories, *alias* National Republicans, *alias* Federalists, came, as they always do when they are invited to a supper, drank the wine, emptied the dishes, and went off saying, "It's no use for these people to imitate *us*; you cannot make a gentleman out of a democrat."

If it were not for the excellent dinners given by the President, and the delightful circles at Mr. Secretary W * * * 's, the democratic senators and members of Congress would never quit their messes, or would be obliged to content themselves with a steak or a chop at one of the two mulatto *restaurants* in the Capitol. General Jackson, who was great in everything, had also an excellent French cook; his dinners, as Miss Martineau can testify, were in the best style, and his wines of the most superior quality. "Oh, he is a delightful old gentleman!" exclaimed a truly aristocratic lady of Baltimore,—“how amiable

in his private intercourse! — no one can be with him without loving him! I wish he *were* ambitious, and met with a better fate than Cæsar!”

The worst objection to democracy is, that, except taverns and coffee-houses, both of which are in exceeding bad repute in the United States, its followers have no regular *rendez-vous*, no *réunions*, no *petits comités* amongst themselves, where its zealots might mutually inspire one another with patriotic sentiments, after the example of the Whigs, who, from time to time, refresh their dying love of liberty with the best West India madeira, furnished by their own cellars. And yet man is a gregarious animal, and, as we all know, woman still more so; both like company, or, as the Americans express it, “love company,” “admire company,” “dote upon company.” “They cannot always stick at home;” the young ladies want to dance and to get married, — the young gentlemen want to have an opportunity of addressing an heiress, and of ap-

pearing to advantage in society. And of what use, after all, *are* their good manners if they cannot show them? All these things operate against democracy, and tend, in a considerable degree, to swell the ranks of the opposition. The people, assuredly, are in possession of all political power; but a very small number of individuals take it upon themselves to fix the conventional standard.

“With whom are you going to dine to-day?” said a gentleman from Philadelphia to one of his friends in Washington.

“With Mr. W * * *,” was the answer.

“Whom will you meet there?”

“Only General F——s, Mr. C * * *, and Mr. B * * *.”

“None of the *corps diplomatique*?”

“None that I know of.”

“No senator?”

“Only Mr. B * * * and Dr. L * * *.”

“No Whig senator?”

“I believe not.”

“Why, then, do you go? You will neither

dine well, nor will you be amused ; and, as for the wine, I never knew a democrat to be a good judge of that article."

This was the death-blow to the young man's democracy. He was a Virginian, and, as such, knew that it was impossible to be a gentleman without being a good judge of wine and horse-flesh. He at first blushed, but soon recovered from his embarrassment by sending " a regret" to his democratic acquaintance. The day following he dined *en petit comité* with Mr. G * * *, where the ridicule thrown on popular institutions undermined his principles still further ; and in the evening the ladies converted him fully to the principles of the opposition.

With the knowledge of all these facts, I could not but tremble for the fate of my pantalooned country representative, who, standing by the side of one of the most enchanting Whig ladies of New York, was now tucking up his cuffs in order to prepare himself for a valiant attack on a goose. This substantial bird, so unjustly ridiculed by the most odious

comparisons with the more aristocratic but infinitely less useful swan, is in America—where swans are fabulous animals—the king of bipeds; capons being, either from natural charity to animals, or from want of the higher refinements, seldom to be met with at an American table. Admiral C——n, it is true, came to the United States to teach the Americans the science of preparing fowl in that manner; but, as he was himself but indifferently skilled in it, (his victims usually crowed the third day after the operation,) the thing was given up, as a practice too cruel to be indulged in “by an enlightened, intellectual, and moral community,” and the admiral obliged to return to England without the slightest hope of securing to himself that enduring fame which future generations award to the lights and benefactors of their race.

The attack now began simultaneously on all sides, the square-built tribune still keeping his position near the lady of the house, and looking upon her more and more tenderly as he was cutting away at the goose. There was a

mixture of gratitude and benevolence in his smile which seemed to tell her that she had not been mistaken; that there was still some hope of winning him, — some slight chance of teaching him refinement and good taste. Accordingly, when he had done eating, — that is, when he could eat no more, — and had rinsed his mouth, in the only way he ever went through that process, by swallowing, in rapid succession, something like half-a-dozen glasses of madeira, — the lady took his arm, whispering, in one of her softest accents, that she disliked a crowd, and that they had better have some chat in the parlour.”

“ With all my heart,” said the tribune, wiping his mouth with a checkered pocket-handkerchief; “ I really do not see what business people have here after they have supped.”

“ At my house, sir,” replied the lady, every one is at liberty to do as he pleases.”

“ Quite a *clever* party, ma’am,” rejoined he, turning down the cuffs of his coat.

“ I am glad you amuse yourself.”

“ Oh that I do ! I always amuse myself at a party.”

Here the lady made a confused sign of acknowledgment.

“ But when we give a party in *our* place,” continued the unabashed man of the people, “ we don’t give such suppers : I have heard the gentleman next to me say that the table, just as it was, must have cost three hundred dollars.”

“ Why,” stammered the lady, “ it ’s impossible for me to say.”

“ I dare say it cost a great deal more,” continued the tribune ; “ I should not like to father the bill.”

“ How old is your eldest daughter, sir ?” demanded the lady, by way of changing the conversation.

“ Pretty nearly sixteen ; she is quite a woman, ma’am.”

“ Why don’t you bring her to town ? I should be happy to make her acquaintance.”

“ Very much obliged to you for your kindness, ma’am ; but it won’t do. New York is

too expensive a place; I should not be able to keep my daughter in the fashions, and, without that, she would not find much pleasure in a stay in this city."

"Come, come, that's an old-fashioned notion of yours; you would not bring up your daughter as a country girl, would you?"

"Not exactly that; but still I like her to know something about housekeeping. Your fine city ladies do not seem to trouble themselves much about that."

"Why, they have other things to do," said the lady, almost impatiently.

"I know that," said the imperturbable representative; "and those things are precisely the ones I do not like my girl to learn."

"But how are you off for society in your village, or rather *town*?—is n't it a *town*?"

"Yes, ma'am, it is a town, and quite a flourishing one too. We have this year built a new school-house and a tavern."

"Very fine buildings, I dare say."

"Oh no, ma'am! only of wood. We can

only afford to build our school-houses of wood ; there is no stone building in our place, *except the bank*. We are not as rich as the people of New York, and have not as much credit either ; but, if things go on well, we shall build another school-house in the course of a year or two, and add a new wing or story to the tavern. We have raised the schoolmaster's *wages* already a dollar a month ; and, if the place goes on increasing, we shall have to look out for an usher."

" I am glad you are doing so well."

" Thank you, ma'am. We have had more than a hundred new people settling among us during the last two years ; some of them quite respectable. Mr. Smith, an Englishman, is a very good blacksmith, and understands breaking colts ; a young man of the name of Biddle—no relation to the great Nic'las Biddle though—is a good tanner ; then we had a new accession of carpenters and day-labourers from Ireland, 'as many as you can shake a stick at.'"

" But, in a growing place, it must be difficult to find agreeable people to visit."

“ We don’t think of visiting ; we have other things to do.”

This was the cue for the lady.

“ Oh ! you are probably taken up with *politics*,” said the lady ; “ a’n’t you ?”

“ Why, we are a pretty patriotic set, ma’am ; all republicans to the back-bone.”

“ I am glad to hear that,” replied the lady ; “ I am myself a republican.”

“ That ’s right, ma’am ; it ’s of no use to be anything else in *this* country. I can’t, for my life, see how people *can* be anything else.”

“ Nor I either,” replied the lady. “ I am sure I am as proud of my country as any one else.”

“ And good reasons you have to be so,” added the tribune ; “ it ’s the first country in the world for an industrious man, such as I know your husband to be.”

“ I don’t mean in that way,” observed the lady, somewhat embarrassed ; “ I am proud of its republican institutions.”

“ It’s the only free country in the world, you may depend upon it.”

“ Besides *England*. I think our people go too far in their liberty.”

“ I don’t think people *can* go too far in that ; the freer the better, is my motto.”

“ That ’s a very dangerous principle, sir ; it leads necessarily to anarchy.”

“ I have often heard it said, but I never believed it. In our town, for instance, we are all democrats, and yet I never knew a row there ever since I was born ; while your nice people of New York run riot on the most trifling occasion.”

“ That ’s owing to the great number of foreigners we have among us ; people who have been slaves at home, and on that account have the most extravagant notion of liberty.”*

“ Why, ma’am, our town consists almost wholly of foreigners, and is as quiet as possible. I think that people who have been oppressed before, may be as much attached to liberty as those who, from its daily enjoyment, have grown indifferent towards it.”

* This is an argument I have constantly heard used against Europeans.

“Why, what singular notions you have, Mr. * * * !” exclaimed the lady ; “ I hope you are not an advocate of the *rabble* ? ”

“ Certainly not ; I represent the *people* of my township.”

“ You do not understand me. When I speak of ‘ the rabble,’ I mean those who have no interest whatever in maintaining our institutions,—foreign paupers and adventurers, and particularly the Irish. I have no objection to liberty in the abstract. I think all men, with the exception of our negroes, ought to be free ; but I cannot bear the ridiculous notion of equality which seems to have taken hold of our people, and which, if it be not counteracted by persons who have the power to do so,” (here she bestowed a significant look upon the tribune), “ must eventually prove the ruin of our country.”

“ I have heard this before,” replied he, “ and I saw it in print too ; but I never believed a word of it. It’s all got up for party purposes ; you may depend upon it, ma’am.”

“Ah, sir ! but I see the truth of it every day of my life.”

“In what manner, pray ?”

“Good gracious ! do you ask me that question ? Is it not a matter of fact ? Can there be the least doubt about a thing which is known to all ? Why, it seems you live somewhat out of the world. Do you ever read the newspapers ?”

“Indeed I do. There are two of them published in our town,—an administration and an opposition paper.”

“Which of the two do you subscribe to ?”

“To the administration paper of course. I have always been a democrat.”

“Oh ! you are a dem—o—crat, are you ?”

“My friends call me one at least.”

“Ah, then you are a democrat for a particular purpose. *That* I can understand. A man may have a particular object in calling himself a democrat, especially in this country ; but no well-informed gentleman, I am sure, would be so mad as to seriously advocate a doctrine which administers to the passions of

the mob, at the expense of the rights and privileges of the better classes. You would not intrust the government to paupers, would you?"

"I believe we have very few paupers in this country, except those who are unwilling to work," replied the representative.

"But if you saw the number of Irish and Germans that are landing here every day—"

"The country is large enough to furnish work for all."

"But they come sometimes five thousand in a week."

"The more the better."

"But would you make citizens of them? Would you allow them to vote?"

"Why not, if they have become naturalized according to law?"

"Do you think those wretches can ever feel what *we* do,—*whose fathers fought and bled for liberty?*"

"But, by granting the privilege of voting only to those that are *born* in the country, you necessarily make citizenship an hereditary

distinction, contrary to the spirit of the American constitution."

"But are not hereditary distinctions necessary to a certain degree of greatness? Look at the English, at their literature, their refinement, their manners; and compare them with ours!"

"I know very little about the English, and care less," replied the tribune. "I do not think that the institutions of Europe would answer for this country. We are a young people. Our wants are few, and easily satisfied; and, as we had in the outset no other interests to protect but those of the masses, I do not see of what use hereditary privileges could be to us, except to make the proud prouder, and the rich more influential, than they already are, much to the dissatisfaction of our party; and, as for manners and refinement, I think we are doing very well, considering that our fashionable people have to *import* them from Europe. We are essentially an industrious people," added he; "and nothing promotes industry so much as to let

all men start fair and even, the foreigner himself not excepted. When there will be no more land to be disposed of to new settlers, then there will come the time for making laws for the *preservation* of property ; at present our chief duty is to facilitate its *acquisition*."

"And would you make no allowances for superior education and learning?"

"To be sure I would ; for such learning as may be applied to some useful purpose,—‘not for the fiddle-stick accomplishments of your capering young boys.’"

"But don't you think democracy has a natural tendency towards vulgarity and bad manners?"

"Certainly not, ma'am ! certainly not ! I am a great advocate of politeness, — good manners, I say,—give me good manners by all means !"

"But how do you reconcile good manners with the everlasting hurrahing for General Jackson and Martin Van Buren?"

"That has nothing to do with good manners ; that's what we call *enthusiasm*."

“ *We*, sir, call it madness — downright madness ! Jackson has ruined the country.”

“ I see some folks are doing pretty well, for all that.”

“ The country went on prosperously until Jackson took it into his head to quarrel with the Bank. He has set the poor against the rich.”

“ Why, ma’am, when I went last up the river to Albany, and then down again to Philadelphia, I found there was quite as much travelling going on this season as in former years, — just as much wine drunk, just as much eaten ; and, compared to last year, rather a little more brandy used than might be thought consistent with the reports of our temperance societies. And, as for setting the poor against the rich, that is a mere matter of opinion. The question of the Bank is a party question. We have attacked it on constitutional grounds, and the opposition have defended it from mercantile policy. We think the constitution of greater importance than anything which is done under it.”

“I see, sir, you are wholly taken up with those doctrines which will eventually prove the destruction of the country. For my own part, I want no better proof of the justice or injustice of either principle *than the comparative respectability of the men who advocate it.*”

Here the lady drew herself back, and cast a side glance at the tribune, who, keeping his eyes fixed upon the points of his boots, appeared for the first time disconcerted by the argument of his fair antagonist. He attempted a reply, stammered a few words which were inaudible, and then looked again at his boots. The lady, perceiving his embarrassment, and the effect of applying the argument *ad hominem*, came to his aid by assuring him that she had, in her time, known a great many “smart democrats” who had all gradually become “respectable Whigs.” “Democracy,” said she, “is a very good beginning,—a sort of political breakfast, prepared in haste, which sits very well on an empty stomach; but it is not the thing a man

can dine on, it is altogether too common for that.

“In a little time,” added she, “you will be convinced of your error, as many an honest man has been before you. Colonel W * * *, for instance, has become quite respectable since he gave up General Jackson. Mr. O * * * H * * * came round in due time ; and the list of converts is expected to swell from day to day, in proportion as the people become more and more civilized. It is only in *that* way that politicians can expect to have a standing in society ; which democrats seldom have, owing to the peculiarity of their doctrines.”

These words, pronounced with a strong emphasis, and with all the aristocratic dignity she could summon to her aid, were not entirely lost upon the tribune, who now looked the lady full in the face, without proffering a single syllable. He probably reflected on his children, on the impossibility of ever introducing them into society as long as he professed to be an advocate of the people : his experience as a public man had probably

shown him that he could leave to his children no worse inheritance than the remembrance of his being "a regular democrat;" that his sons would be avoided, and his daughters remain unnoticed, if he did not change his political doctrines. He knew, or might have known, that the inquisition in Spain never exercised so direct and deadening an influence on the minds of the Spaniards, as the intolerance of the higher classes in the United States on the minds of aspiring politicians; and that, in general, the despots of Europe are more willing to make allowances for youth, inexperience, enthusiasm, and political conviction, than the wealthy aristocrats of the American republic. Yet his honesty and fortitude triumphed; he remained imperturbable. But he felt the sting of her satire; and perceiving that he had mistaken his place, and that it was best for him to associate with his *equals*, he "sneaked off," if possible, with a stronger hatred and contempt for the haughty aristocracy of New York than he had entertained before he had tasted of its hospitality.

“ Shall I not see you to-morrow at my counting-room ? ” whispered the master of the house into his ears when he saw him ready to leave the room.

“ I don’t know whether I shall have time,” replied the country representative sulkily.

“ Why, what’s the matter, sir ? I shall not let you go until you have tasted my old sherry ; come, Mr. * * *, let us have a glass of wine together.”

“ Thank you, sir ! I a’n’t dry. *I have had quite as much as I could wish for.* Good night ! ”

The gentleman looked for an explanation of this extraordinary conduct to his wife, and in an instant all was clear.

“ How can you trouble yourself with such a bore ? ” whispered he ; “ that’s not the way to win him. If you cannot effect your purpose by flattery,—censure, I am sure, will not do it. These proud, stupid, stubborn country fellows require more management than you are aware of. You must puff them up ; impress them with the notion of their own importance ;

show them how their talents might be employed in a nobler cause, &c. If that won't answer, you must endeavour to alienate their wives and children by instilling into them a taste for fashionable society, and, if possible, run them in debt. When their habits have become extravagant, when they are once in debt, then we talk to them differently,—one *accommodation* requires another.”

“That man,” observed my friend, “understands his business well; but his wife is a mere tyro in the art of converting people to her own persuasion. That representative may yet be won. I have seen better men corrupted, and with less means than will be employed against him; but, should he hold out, nothing will equal the abuse which will be heaped upon him.

“It is indeed strange,” continued he, “to see how these two parties hate one another; how there is not the least communion or good fellowship amongst them; how they avoid each other on all occasions; and what a complete system of proscription is practised by

the higher classes with regard to the unfortunate democrats! Prince Metternich cannot hold the Radicals in greater abhorrence than they are held by the wealthy merchants, lawyers, and bankers in the United States. And, as regards our Whig politicians, they might go to Europe to learn *moderation* and *tolerance* at the courts of absolute sovereigns.

“And is it not strange, that, in a country in which the *passion* of love is probably less felt than anywhere else, *hatred* should form so great an ingredient in the national composition? And what hatred too! the most constant,—the most steady,—the most unceasing that has ever been known to separate individuals or nations!

“‘Hatred,’ says Goethe, ‘like love, dies when it ceases to increase;’ but he had no idea of the cool, calm, collected, slow hatred of certain classes of Americans. They are not like the French, who, when offended, cannot rest until they are revenged; not like the Germans, who are not easily offended; but

being 'wrought, perplexed in the extreme,' they can wait for years until a *convenient* opportunity offers itself for paying off an insult or destroying an enemy.

"I remember, a short time ago, when a public man in Philadelphia had acted a double part towards me, to have called upon an acquaintance and expressed my indignation at what I thought ungentlemanly and villainous conduct. 'What is the use of your saying so now?' said he with great calmness; 'why don't you keep cool, and wait for an opportunity of paying him off in his own coin with interest?'

"Nor is it always possible to tell when they *are* offended. They have too much self-respect to show that they are wrought, but calmly wait for the proper time of seizing upon their victim. The hatred of most men dies when the object of their dislike is removed,—when they are revenged,—when their victim is passed to another world. Not so with the educated Americans. They hate even

the *memory* of those that have thwarted their designs. Robespierre is not more detested in France, than Jefferson and Jackson are among the higher classes of Americans. I have seen fashionable women in Boston and Philadelphia almost thrown into convulsions at the very mention of their names. And what appears most strange is, that this hatred is hereditary; for it is a fact, no less interesting than instructive, that the higher classes in the United States have no political conviction at all. Their professions that way are the result of mere bias, produced by the opinions and sentiments of their early friends and associates. Democracy is in bad odour among the fashionable circles, which is quite sufficient for every coxcomb to despise it, and to affect an abhorrence of its 'vulgar and profligate' champions. There exists, in America, the same feeling with regard to republicanism which characterized the French shortly after the publication of the works of Voltaire and Rousseau with regard to religion: every one wants to escape

from the lash of satire, and therefore shows in words and actions that he is one of those to whom it does not apply.

“ It is quite common for educated and travelled Americans to *apologize* to Englishmen for the extraordinary degree of freedom enjoyed by the lower orders. Their usual excuse is, ‘ that the constitution of the United States was the work of momentary enthusiasm, which, when the people shall have cooled down, must necessarily undergo such wholesome alterations and modifications as reason and experience shall dictate.’ In the mean while they must go on as well as they can, until the influence of wealth and the gradual return to the sound doctrines of English statesmanship, or, perhaps, also ‘ the evils incidental to a popular government,’ shall have prepared the people for a different administration of their affairs, more suitable to the tranquil enjoyment of life. If it were not for the hue and cry raised by Jefferson and Jackson, the thing might have been done long ago ; but, unfortunately for the peace and prosperity of the

country, there will always be vagabonds enough — people who have everything to gain, and nothing to lose, — ready to follow such leaders !”

“As a proof of the attachment of certain old families to England,” said I to my friend, “and the ludicrous notions of their own importance, I must repeat to you the speech of a gentleman from the Eastern States, with whom I had the honour of dining three or four years ago. Dinner went off prosperously ; and, the company being small, the bottle came round faster than some of us could wish, until, as a finish, one of the gentlemen present proposed that each of us should give a toast. When it came to my turn, I, as a loyal German, could not but propose the health of the Archduke Charles of Austria. ‘Bravo!’ shouted the master of the house, ‘a good old toast that ! drunk many a time at my father’s house with three times three and all the honours ! I shall not do worse by the duke than my parent.’ And hereupon the health of the archduke was drunk in a bumper.

“ ‘But,’ said I, ‘in 1809, the Archduke of Austria was an ally of England; and at that time matters in America were assuming a serious aspect, the war with Britain being considered as unavoidable.’

“ ‘I know that,’ rejoined mine host: ‘but what would have become of England if *we* had forsaken her at that time?’

“ ‘What a debt of gratitude does England owe to America! and yet what an ill-natured, peevish, ungenerous return do the English make for so much kindness bestowed upon them by their friends across the Atlantic!’”

“ ‘But do you not think,’ demanded I of my friend, “that this English aristocratic feeling — this going in mourning for monarchy of the old Federalists, — is gradually dying away?”

“ ‘To be sure it is,’ replied he; “but another, much more arrogant in its nature, is taking the place of it. ‘The old Federalists,’ as you are pleased to call them, who, if not attached to England, at least openly avowed their admiration of the British constitution, were, in spite

of their predilection in favour of English manners, infinitely less exclusive and intolerant, and much less addicted to the spirit of castes, than our ‘aristocratic Whigs’ of the present day, who would rather shut themselves up in hermetically sealed houses than share the light of heaven with a mechanic. The former acknowledged at least some power at home or abroad, to which they considered themselves responsible; the latter aim at the absolute government of the country.

“‘England,’ say our *first people*, ‘is the freest country in the world,’ (which I, for one, am not disposed to deny, inasmuch as a man may speak his opinion there, without setting the whole nation against him, and running the risk of being tarred and feathered,) ‘and yet in England,’ they say, ‘there exists the least equality of conditions. Do we wish to be wiser than the English? Shall we shake hands with every one? associate with every one, and treat every one as our equal, because, forsooth, his *vote* is as good as ours?’

“Some years ago,” continued my friend, “I

remember being told very seriously by a red-nosed friend of mine,—who, by the by, was a great advocate of te-totalism, but had lived rather freely in his youth,—that most Europeans, but especially the vulgar English, have a notion that in America there is no rank or distinction of castes. ‘Here,’ said he, ‘is a letter I just received from an English music-master, to whom I was obliged to send a note in consequence of his want of punctuality in paying his rent. The note, of course, was written in a plain *business style*, reminding him merely of the fact that the money would fall due on the 15th instant. Now what do you think *the fellow* did? He wrote me back a note couched in precisely the same terms, and, if possible, more cavalierly than my own; as if the whole were a transaction between two individuals of the same standing.’ Here he read me the note, which, as far as I am able to recollect, ran thus:

“ ‘Mr. * * * has received Mr. * * *’s note of this morning, and, in reply to it, assures Mr. * * * that his rent will be ready *when*

due, and that it would equally have been so without Mr. * * * reminding him of it.'

" 'Such,' said he, 'are the notions of the low English that come to this country !' "

" 'Did you take any further steps in the matter ?' " demanded I.

" 'Oh, no, sir ; I thought it best to take no notice of him.' "

" Now, where was the impudence of the man, who was dunned before he became a debtor ? and what English landlord would have been more shocked with the insolence of his tenant, under similar circumstances ?

" Another species of tyranny," continued my friend, " exercised by the higher classes of Americans consists in the proscription of all people belonging, or rather attempting to belong, to different sets. If you belong to the first society, you must not by any chance accept an invitation to the second, or shake hands in a friendly manner with people who are supposed to be of an inferior standing, except it be on election day for a political purpose. If you belong to the second, you may, of course,

try with all your might ‘to push for the first;’ but, if you are once seen with the third, you have done even with the second : and so on.

“The French had, even under Charles X, too much democracy in their composition to be taken for safe models by the enlightened Americans ; and, now, even the English are becoming too far liberalised to serve as a proper standard for our aristocracy.

“If the manners of the English are, in general, stiff and reserved, those of our fashionable people are rude and repulsive ; for we have the peculiar faculty of improving on everything we borrow from Europe, commencing with the cut of our clothes, and ending with our language and manners.

“It is for this reason the dress of our young ladies — and especially the *costume de bal* — is less becoming than that of the French ; their *air dégagé* is apt to be mistaken for forwardness ; and their conversation, where the thing is at all attempted, is fraught with the slang—or, what is worse, the *learning*—of the boarding-school.

Whenever one of our girls ‘gets an European education,’ an attempt is made to make her a walking encyclopædia of arts and sciences; and this, not so much for the sake of developing her mind, as to make her ‘superior to other girls,’ whom she is to outshine in society. I once heard a gentleman recommend an instructor to teach his daughter a little of everything.’ ‘I want her,’ said he, ‘to know *a little* of Latin and Greek, a little of mathematics, a little of astronomy, and a little of everything else; in short, I never want her to be embarrassed in society, let the conversation turn on what it may.’ There is a young lady of that description here. She has just done spouting Virgil to one man, and Euclid to another, and now she is playing a waltz on the piano. She has a whole circle of admirers, fresh from the counting-room, around her, who, I dare be sworn, look upon her as the eighth wonder of the world; only an Englishman was impudent enough to observe that her acquirements tasted, one and all, of ‘Murray’s Elements.’

“As a *pendant* to the fashionable lady, you

may notice, opposite the looking-glass, one of our American exquisites. His dress was made in London, but his manners are those of the most accomplished French coxcomb. His air, gait, and voice are affected, the latter being almost screwed to a childish treble; his conversation is copiously sprinkled with foreign idioms, and he has the vanity of inviting the young ladies of his acquaintance to smell his hair, which he assures them is *scented with real Persian perfume!* Could you expect such a man to be in favour of a less rigid distinction of castes? Could you imagine him to associate with people whose hair is only greased with pomatum, or, as is but too frequently the case in this country, with nothing but natural grease?

“And now look, for one moment, on our *middle-aged* gentlemen and ladies. Among the first we reckon those who are settled down in some respectable business; the latter term comprises all the married women in the country. At a party you can always distinguish them, even if they should happen to be *young*, by

their greater sobriety; the men being satisfied with talking about business, and the women, if they do not belong to the very tip-top of fashion, being quietly seated near the wall, or in some corner of the room, talking, at times, very loud amongst themselves, but modestly answering the embarrassing variety of questions addressed to them by the gentlemen, of which unfortunately I was never able to remember more than two, viz. ‘How do you do, ma’am?’ and then, in the course of a quarter of an hour, with a pathetic emphasis and a sigh, ‘How do you do again?’

“It has been asserted that, notwithstanding our many social deficiencies, there is yet a vast deal of *intelligence* in many of our small evening circles. This, in general, may be true; but I do not think our people understand the art of amusing themselves. We have little of the *laissez aller* of the French, and still less of *la bagatelle*. Moreover, we do not trust one another sufficiently, even at our parties. We always are, or imagine ourselves to be, in public, where we may meet with the eye of a

reporter, and, perchance, see ourselves in print. Some of our first people went to Europe for the express purpose of learning how to live; but, on their return, never did more than go through the regular exercises of entertaining people,—a thing which proved to be as great a source of annoyance to themselves, as it was one of cheerless dissipation to their friends.

“Our people, in fact, will continue to remain tyros in the art of living, until they will have learned how to *laugh*. The occasional shaking of the diaphragm—absolutely necessary to the health of people not in a habit of taking active exercise—is a practice only popular among the negroes in the Southern States, who, to judge from appearances, are the happiest people in the Union. In New England I have only, now and then, remarked a spasmodic contraction of the muscles of the face approaching a smile or a grin; and in Boston, a city of more than eighty thousand inhabitants, there were but two gentlemen—one of English and the other of German extraction—who were

known to have ever burst out in a horse-laugh. The much-praised intelligence of the higher classes of that 'learned' city resembles truly a December sun;—it gives you enough light to see by, but you require a fire to be comfortable."

Hardly had he spoken these words before a new general move betokened the breaking-up of the party. The married ladies and gentlemen had, in fact, been ready to go home ever since supper was over; but remained, either to oblige their children, or out of politeness to their entertainers, who were particularly anxious of the honour of keeping *late* hours. Sundry gapes and heavy eyelids had, indeed, long ago indicated their disposition to go to rest; but they were not taken notice of by the dancers, who appeared to be as fresh as ever, and prepared for the by no means unusual thing of a second supper. The good sense of the elderly portion, however, prevailed; and in a few moments every young *gallant* was on his knees—to assist his fair partner to put on her India rubber overshoes, (for in the United

276 BREAKING UP OF THE PARTY.

States no servant is permitted to touch the foot of a lady,) and the company separated, after saluting the lady of the house, and shaking the hand of the gentleman.

CHAPTER VII.

Late Hours kept in New York.—The Oyster-shops of New York compared to those of Philadelphia.—Important Schism on that Subject.—The Café de l'Indépendance.—A French Character.—Description of a Fashionable Oyster-shop.—A Sensible American just returned from Paris.—His Account of American Aristocracy abroad.—Mr. L* * * and Mr. Thistle.—A shrewd Yankee Tailor in Paris.—His Advice to his Countrymen.—An American Senator scorning to become the fee'd Advocate of the Mob, after the manner of O'Connell.

Mons. Jourdain.—"Et comme l'on parle, qu'est-ce que c'est donc que cela?"

Le maître de philosophie.—"De la prose."

Mons. Jourdain.—"Quoi! quand je dis, 'Nicole, apportez-moi mes pantoufles, et me donnez mon bonnet de nuit,' c'est de la prose?"

Le maître de philosophie.—"Oui, monsieur."

Mons. Jourdain.—"Par ma foi! il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien; et je vous suis le plus obligé du monde de m'avoir appris cela."

MOLIERE'S *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Act ii. Scene 5.

THOSE of my readers who are not aware of the fact that New York is an excellent place

for shell-fish, know in all probability little or nothing of the many elegant subterraneous establishments called "oyster-cellars" which adorn the principal avenues and public places of the great American Persepolis. The good people of New York swear that their oysters are the best in the world; and though I, for my own part, greatly prefer the delicate little "natives" of Colchester, or the still more savoury "green oysters of Ostend," I never before now dared to express my opinion on so delicate a subject, for fear of becoming unpopular, and being eventually excluded from society. One thing, however, I can testify; which is, that the Americans display, in the different modes of *cooking* and *dressing* them, a degree of refinement altogether incommensurate with the little progress they have thus far made in other equally useful and important branches of the culinary art.

The New-Yorkers alone have, I believe, twenty different ways of cooking oysters; the Philadelphians, who will not suffer themselves to be in anything outdone by their neighbours,

twenty-one ; and the Baltimorians boast of a still greater variety of dishes prepared of that most excellent shell-fish. This, in a country in which there is but one way of dressing meat, and precisely the same number of sorts of gravy, is certainly a most extraordinary phenomenon, and betokens an aristocratic predilection in favour of that slippery *friandise*, sufficient to establish its vast superiority over roast beef, the standing dish of the great mass of the American people. Oysters, in fact, have acquired a patrician reputation ; though, like most of the distinctions lately introduced into the United States, they are only to be found along the sea-coast, and for the most part bedded *in sand*. Some of them occasionally find their way to the “Western Country ;” but they seldom remain there long in *good odour*. I could tell a number of crack stories on this subject ; but, my diary having already grown longer than I at first anticipated, I am obliged to omit them, and content myself with mentioning the important schism, which, ever since the quakers established them-

selves in Philadelphia, separated the respectable inhabitants of that city from the enterprising descendants of the great Knickerbocker.

The Philadelphians maintain that *their* oyster-cellars are by far the most elegant, the most costly, and the most select in point of company, of any in the United States; which, they say, must strike any one who will take the trouble of spending the hours from ten in the evening till one in the morning in one of the splendid subterraneous vaults of that sort in Chesnut-street. “Not only,” say the Philadelphians, “would he be astonished at the taste and splendour of all the arrangements,—at the vastness, and even magnificence of the rooms, the excellence of the wines, &c.—but also at the number of respectable young men, sons of the first families, who, by their nightly presence, give a high *ton* to these establishments. An oyster-cellar may, indeed, be considered as a school for good breeding; and is, in a singularly felicitous manner, emblematic of the happiness, quiet, and self-sufficiency of the peaceable in-

habitants of the city ‘of brotherly love.’ Besides, the oyster-cellars in Philadelphia are mostly kept by *white* men; which fact would of itself be sufficient to establish their superiority over the negro and mulatto establishments of that kind in the comparatively dirty city of New York.”

Hereupon the New-Yorkers remark “that the company which frequent *their* oyster-cellars, though perhaps not quite so respectable and numerous in the *evening*, is nevertheless a great deal more so in *day-time*; that the Philadelphia company is often *mixed*, and in some instances absolutely *vulgar*, owing to the low price of oysters; whereas in New York, where good oysters cannot be procured for less than $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents (equal to about 1s. 6d.) a dozen, *loafers* (this is the American term for blackguards) are completely excluded, and sent to the more plebeian beef-shops. As regards the stigma of having their oyster-shops kept by negroes and mulattoes, it is to be observed that of late a number of ‘clever white men’ have taken that lucrative business out of the hands

of the Africans, by whom it has been too long degraded, and introduced a series of improvements in every respect worthy of the high reputation which distinguishes New York among her sister cities."

But there is one point in which the New-Yorkers have an immeasurable advantage over the Philadelphians, — an advantage which proves their city as much superior to Philadelphia as Paris is to a country town of France, or London to a rotten borough; viz. the New York oyster-cellars remain open until three or four in the morning, whereas the Philadelphians close theirs very soon after one: a custom which is vulgar and provincial in the extreme; and prevents many a gentleman, who has made but an indifferent supper at a party, from procuring himself the gratification of the nightmare.

These preliminaries, I think, will be sufficient to introduce the gentle reader to the sort of establishment towards which my friend and I were now wending our way. The city hall clock had long ago struck the hour of one; the

crowd, which till late in the evening renders Broadway a scene of busy activity, had dispersed to their respective homes; and the inhabitants of the great commercial emporium of the New World actually appeared to have gone to rest for the night; when, on approaching the *Café de l'Indépendance*, the mingled sound of voices and instruments convinced us that a certain portion of the Americans at least were in the habit of keeping later hours than even the Parisians.*

“Let us look in,” proposed my friend. “It’s quite a nice establishment. The furniture alone cost more than fifty thousand dollars.”

“Is it not too late?” demanded I. “I thought I heard you say you wanted some oysters: will they not shut up in the mean time?”

“No danger of that,” replied he: “the oyster-cellars of this city are on the plan of the early breakfast houses in London; they give

* It is well known that, except during the Carnival, the coffee-houses in Paris shut up shortly after the close of the theatres, which is seldom later than twelve o’clock.

you a supper or a breakfast, whichever you please."

On entering the coffee-room, we found ourselves enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke, which at first prevented us from discerning the corps of German musicians that were regaling a motley group of Europeans and Americans with some of the best compositions of their countrymen. In justice to the Americans, I am bound to say that nine-tenths of the whole company present were foreigners,—principally Frenchmen and Spaniards, who seemed to be very little afflicted with home-sickness,—enjoying, perhaps for the first time in their lives, their *petit verre* and cigar without the surveillance of the *haute police*, or the disagreeable intrusion of some municipal guards.

"These Frenchmen," said my friend, "cannot be happy without *cafés* and *estaminets*. Deprive them of their *demi-tasse*, their *petit verre*, and their *partie de domino*, and you set them at once in a state of rebellion; and yet I never saw a place in which they appear to be more at home than in New York."

“ I have heard it said this morning that a Frenchman would rather live in New York than in any town of France, except Paris.”

“ And well he may,” rejoined my friend. “ There is nothing more tiresome than a residence in a provincial town of France.”

“ What surprises me most,” resumed I, “ is that the French in this country take so little interest in politics.”

“ That is easily accounted for,” observed my friend. “ Politics, in France, are the exclusive occupation of editors, from whom the people receive their daily allowance, with such seasoning as suits the peculiarity of their taste : in America, on the contrary, every man is called upon to take an active part in them, which is more than a man is willing to do who is as fond of amusement as a Frenchman.”

While he was delivering his opinion in this manner, an elderly gentleman rose from behind a marble slab table, and, seizing the hand of my friend, exclaimed, in an accent which very strongly resembled the Gascon,

“Que diable ! faites-vous ici à cette heure-ci ? Je croyais toujours qu’il n’y avait que les Français qui se tenaient debout après minuit ! Et n’avez-vous pas peur qu’on vous dénonce demain dans les journaux,—vous qui êtes un homme public ?”

“Taisez-vous donc, monsieur,” whispered my friend ; *“vous me trahissez.”*

“Is de gentleman vid you an American ?” demanded the Frenchman in a low voice, and in broken English.

“To all intents and purposes he is,” answered my friend.

“Je vous comprends,” said the Frenchman with a significant nod. *“’T is is a very fine evening, sar !”*

“Very fine, indeed,” responded I.

“Do you tink it vil rain to-morrow ?”

“I hope it may ; it is most excessively warm.”

“Dat is de reason I am ’ere,” said the Frenchman ; *“I cannot slip ven it is so very ’ot !”*

“And how is your lady ?” demanded my friend.

“Very vel, I tank you, sar! Madame D * * *, you know, is most happy ven she is alone. *C'est son caractère Bréton.*”

“Have you been at the theatre this evening?” continued my friend in his interrogatory.

“No, sar! I never go to de teatre,” replied the Frenchman. “I have given lessons until very late, and just came 'ere to read *le Courier des Etats-Unis* before going to bed. *Puis-je vous offrir quelque chose?*”

“I am much obliged to you; but it is too late,” replied my friend.

“Too late!” exclaimed the Frenchman with affected astonishment; then suddenly recollecting himself, and taking out his watch, “*Upon my honneur,*” cried he, “it is past two a clock. I 'ad no idee dat it vos so late;” and, without saying another word, the poor fellow took up his hat and cane, and vanished through the back entry.

“That Frenchman,” observed my friend, “is one of the most arrant cowards I ever saw in this country. He has married an American

lady ; and is afraid lest his being seen at a public-house should exclude him from the society of his wife's acquaintance. We have a good many foreigners among us, on whom the dread of public opinion, and the peculiar fashions of our people, act as a similar restraint. You can hardly say of any man in this country that he is master *in his own house* ; much less is he at liberty to act as he pleases *in public* ; but there are very few Frenchmen among us, I assure you, at least among the wealthier classes, who do not think with Molière's *Tartuffe*, '*que ce n'est pas pêcher que de pêcher en silence.*' But it's now high time to leave this place if we wish to take aught before going to bed." So saying, he threw some change on the plate which one of the musicians presented to him, and, snatching up his hat, opened the door for our exit.

When we re-entered Broadway, the moon had spread her mantle over the house-tops ; a delicious breeze, which during the heat of day had been sleeping on the breast of the

ocean, whispered comfort to the weary citizens; the dim noise of the multitude had wholly subsided; and the rattle of carriages, growing fainter and fainter, gradually died away at a distance. On approaching the neighbourhood of the Park, however, new traces of life appeared, until at last the brilliant façade of the theatre, surrounded by a host of liquor-shops, eating-houses, and oyster-cellars, presented itself through the dark-green foliage with the magic light of an enchanted castle.

“This part of the town,” observed my friend, “is never quiet; it is the *perpetuum mobile* of America.”

Accordingly, as we came near the corner, everything appeared to be animated: hackney-coaches stood in readiness to convey those who either did not feel disposed or were no longer able to walk, to any part of the city; and the doors of the eating-houses, tap-rooms, and oyster-cellars were thrown open for the reception of company.

My friend, who happened to be somewhat acquainted in New York, selected the esta-

blishment in the corner ; which we entered, by descending six or seven steps into a capacious bar-room, furnished in very good style, and lit with gas as brilliantly as any saloon in London. This was a sort of reception hall, intended for those who *drank without stopping* ; the real supper-rooms, with something like eighteen or twenty boxes to preserve the incognito of the visitors, being lodged in another part of the building.

The first thing which struck our attention was a large black board, on which there were printed, in the shape of a bill of fare, the nice little items of “ wild duck,” “ wild turkey with oyster sauce,” “ roast chicken,” “ chicken salad,” “ roast oysters,” “ fried oysters,” “ stewed oysters,” “ scolloped oysters,” &c. &c. &c.

We naturally took this as a favourable omen, and were about to betake ourselves to the only empty box that was yet left, when my friend recognised, in a gentleman that was entering the room, one of his former classmates, who had just returned from Paris,

where he had devoted himself for several years to the study of medicine.

After the usual manifestations of joy, shaking of hands, and asking of questions, which neither of them pretended to answer but by asking fresh ones,—for my friend and his schoolfellow were both Southerners, and not in the habit of finishing a thing of that sort by a laconic “How d’ye do? I am very glad to see you,”—my friend at last succeeded in getting the companion of his youth seated by his side, and eliciting from him, as far as I am able to remember, the following honest confession of his experience in foreign parts, and the state of things he found on his return to his native country.

“I must freely confess to you,” said he, “that what I saw of my countrymen abroad, did not materially contribute to increase my respect for them; neither did I think it calculated to enhance the respect with which Europeans are wont to look upon the untried institutions of our country. They hunt

men of hereditary titles and privileges just as much, and even more, than the English; the highest ambition which I ever knew them guilty of being the desire of associating with a count or a prince. And so different are their notions of rank and titles, of superiority and inferiority, from those of Europeans in general, that they make themselves not only hated by the admirers of republican principles, but also ridiculous in the eyes of every sensible Tory.

“If one of our business men were to-day invited to a prince’s, and to-morrow to a count’s or a baron’s, you might be sure of his playing the aristocrat at the baron’s house, merely because he was before asked to a prince’s; and if, by accident, he had the day following met with one of his countrymen ‘not yet as high up in society as himself,’ he would have deemed it a duty due to his new standing ‘to cut him dead,’ though he might have known him from his infancy.

“The petty jealousies among the Americans have equally disgusted me in every part of

Europe; and appeared to me the more ludicrous, as the being admitted into society depended frequently on circumstances altogether beyond their control. In one instance it was owing to a letter of introduction, for which they were indebted to the politeness of a friend, or the kind interference of a third person, to whom they were entirely unknown; in the other, to a high regard for the country of which they were, nominally at least, the representatives; and, in not a few cases, I can assure you, to mere curiosity. And yet you ought to have heard those people, who were thus by mere chance brought in contact with persons enjoying hereditary distinctions, talk ‘of the different orders of society,’ with the same degree of earnestness as if, by associating with the higher classes, they had actually partaken of their qualities!”

“And, then, what American, if he sets out to do it, cannot *force himself* into the best society by having recourse to a stratagem? which, I believe, is altogether of our own invention, and consists in the practice of asking people

to whom we are recommended, to introduce us to others with whom *they* are acquainted; and so on. Not only does our acquaintance, in this manner, wonderfully increase; but, as every one of our friends must necessarily know some two or three persons above him, we cannot but ‘*get up by degrees,*’ until we reach a point infinitely above the level of our first introduction.* Some conceited Englishmen have called this practice ‘the method of begging one’s-self into society;’ but, with our *élite*, nothing is deemed unfair which is not absolutely opposed to the established laws of the country.”

“But some of our people keep elegant establishments in Paris, and, I am told, actually ruin

* In some instances a mere name will answer the purpose of an introduction. Mr. * * *, of Boston, meets in Paris Mr. W * * *, with whom he became acquainted in Philadelphia. “Do you know Chateaubriand?” asks the Bostonian.—“I meet him very often.”—“Is he worth knowing?”—“Most assuredly.”—“Adieu!”—The day following Mr. W * * * meets Chateaubriand. “*Un drôle de corps* that!” says Chateaubriand, “you sent me yesterday.”—“Who, I?”—“Yes, you, sir!”—“Whom?”—“The American.” The conclusion of the dialogue may be imagined.

themselves by entertaining the nobility," observed my friend.

"Some *may* injure themselves in that way," replied the young physician; "but I am sure others make money by it. Trust a Yankee to himself!"

"I do not quite understand you," observed my friend.

"The thing is plain enough," rejoined the physician; "the society of the nobility procures them the custom of their own countrymen, who consider a man of that sort as 'a stepping-stone to something better;' and he, poor innocent soul! makes them pay for the use they make of him."

"*A propos*," demanded my friend, "have you dined with Mr. L * * *?"

"I was *invited* to dine there; but merely listened to the gentleman's own eulogy of his wines, and the eloquent description of every dish that was put upon the table, in order, afterwards, quietly to sneak off, and appease the cravings of my stomach at some snug little *restaurant* on the other side of the water. The gentleman

you allude to has, moreover, lately turned jockey, and is now entertaining clergymen and physicians with nothing but horse-flesh. He probably thinks that this will ingratiate him with the English, and, in some respects, place him on the same footing with Lord S—r.”

“ All I have heard of that extraordinary little man, who, as I understand, has already risen to the dignity of ‘ *un homme de passage*,’* convinces me that he is acting the *bourgeois gentilhomme*, for the peculiar gratification of the less rich, but more refined, gentlemen of the old *régime* ; only that he is not quite so generous as his original in the inimitable comedy of Molière.”

“ Neither does he trouble himself with so many *masters*. He is, in this respect at least, a true independent American, whose conversation would convince you in a moment that he has never had a master in his life. So far from

* This, as is well known, is the term applied by the witty Parisians to those distinguished personages whose caricatured busts are exhibited in the principal arcades of the city.

it, he has himself turned schoolmaster, teaching a certain portion of his *raw* countrymen, not indeed the art of *eating*, but of *preparing* savoury dishes. Let one of those persons have the most trifling advantage over any of his fellow beings, and he is sure to use it as a means of establishing his superiority; for the scrambling for rank is born with them, and is only increased by a residence in Europe."

"Neither does it merely apply to such ordinary characters as you have just mentioned," added my friend. "I have known American *editors* assume in Paris—seldom, I believe, in London—an air of supercilious dignity, which would have been amusing if it had not been too absurd to be tolerated. They would *allow* Chevalier, and other writers of the French periodical press, to *cultivate* their acquaintance, and occasionally 'condescend to *receiving* them at their houses;' as if the hospitality they had received in Paris, and the willingness of certain people of fashion to come to their *soirées*, had actually given to their talents—which, if they had remained in Ame-

rica, would, in all probability, have never been known to the world—an additional lustre, that outshone the merits of their European contemporaries.”

“ There might have been another reason for the aristocratic presumption of the American editor,” observed the physician. “ The American may have kept a *valet*, while his French colleague was probably satisfied with the service of the *garçon* of his hotel. A thing of this sort separates an American man of letters from an European as effectually as if the ocean rolled its waves between them.”

“ That *must* be the case,” resumed my friend ; “ for, if literary reputation were the sole basis of their respective ranks, I think our American editors would be obliged to give in.”

“ And yet they pretend to pity the political ignorance of the French, and even the English ; forgetting that those nations have two thousand years’ history on their backs, which must necessarily form the precedent to the great majority of their conclusions.”

“ But have you not seen the famous Mr. Thistle ? ” demanded my friend. “ I understand he keeps the crack house in Paris.”

“ He certainly does,” replied the physician ; “ and there is at least something in his manner of entertaining people which appears to be frank and generous, though a great many of our first society think him excessively vulgar for not inviting them. The fact is, he can command better company in Paris than that of his own countrymen ; and, under these circumstances, he is not to be censured for excluding those who otherwise would have excluded *him*. On the whole, I am rather glad that a character like his should be somewhere established in Europe ; it is a living parody of the leading features of our aristocracy, illustrative of the true principle on which our ‘ first people ’ claim equality with the *noblesse* of Europe, and the conditions on which the latter are willing to admit it. Mr. Thistle, moreover, has quite a patrician bearing, which is truly burlesque when compared to the less than ordinary

carriage of those who will have nothing to do with him, because they never associated with him in his own country."

"And what does Mr. Thistle care for the slander-hurling tongues of his countrymen?—he whose mansion has been repeatedly graced by the presence of princes of the blood? And where is the fashionable American who, in spite of his fox-like protestations to the contrary, would not be glad to have the *entrée* of a house, the *réunion* of the best and most ancient society of Paris?"

"Mr. Thistle is not merely admitted into the best society, he is actually one of them; though the preliminary steps of his promotion are kept as secret as those of the candidates for admission into the oldest fraternity on earth, and perhaps somewhat humiliating, as are said to be the first introductions to that honourable body. One little fact, however, could not entirely be concealed from the world; which is this, that when the *élite* of the *faubourg St. Germain*, who first took him by the hand, put it to the vote what persons should be admitted

to his parties, the master of the house himself was excluded.

“The most sensible American I met in Paris,” continued the physician, “was Mr. * * *, a tailor from Boston ; and the most insipid of my countrymen were those for whom he made the uniforms for presentation at court. These, in the absence of any fixed rule, (I have no doubt that, in case of Mr. Van Buren’s being ousted, a bill will be introduced into Congress prescribing the uniforms to be worn by American citizens abroad,) were altogether left to the fancy of the artist, who never failed to recommend to every inexperienced Yankee courtier to put *a star* on his coat, in opposition to the *eagle* worn by the servants of the American minister. In this manner, he assured his patrons, they would neither risk being taken for servants, nor would they have to be ashamed of wearing plain coats by the side of persons all decorated with ribbons. Those who held a high rank in the militia he always advised to be presented in the uniform of colonel, that being the lowest title a respectable American

ought ever to assume in Europe; and a military dress being the best excuse for the natural *brusquerie* of men fresh taken from business. In this manner the shrewd Yankee tailor not only acquires a fortune, but also sees his reputation travel, with his coats, from shore to shore; there being Americans that will never cross the British Channel without a suit of military clothes, in case they should be invited to dine or breakfast with a nobleman.

“ But I do not wish to dwell any longer on the absurdities of our people abroad, for we are in this respect just like the English; our true character being only to be found at home, where it developes itself under the immediate influence of our institutions. Nothing, therefore, could be more preposterous than to judge us by the specimens we send abroad; and it was a wise remark of Thomas Jefferson, though, I believe, sufficiently misunderstood by his countrymen, that an American who has lived above seven years in Europe is a stranger to his own country, and no longer fit for any office of responsibility, even if he

should have been employed during all that time as a diplomatic agent of his government."

"Thomas Jefferson," observed my friend, "has said a number of clever things, and warned us against a great many mistakes into which we have since fallen. He particularly dreaded the influence of British example on our public and private character; and the result has proved that he was not mistaken."

"And yet how little did he suspect that our political partisans would find professional statesmen willing to become the fee'd advocates of their doctrines, after the manner of O'Connell!" rejoined the physician.

"What do you mean?" interrupted I, astonished at the boldness of the remark.

"I mean what I say," replied he; "I know a senator for whom the manufacturers of his district are said to make an annual purse, on the ground that his Congressional duties interfere with the exercise of his profession as a lawyer."

“ I cannot believe it,” interrupted my friend with some vehemence ; “ and I will not believe it : but, even if it were true,” added he, with a sardonic smile, “ the honourable senator would, for the honour of his State, be the very reverse of the vulgar Irish agitator ; one is paid by his rich and respectable constituents, the other by the very beggars of his country ! None of our Whig senators, I am sure, would ever condescend to become the hired advocates of the mob.”

“ A fine piece of news this !” ejaculated the physician ; “ but I suspected as much as this when I saw the change wrought on the manners and customs of our people since my absence ; how the simple, unsophisticated habits of our citizens have given way to cold formality and conceit,—and how the generous hospitality which was wont to grace our people is fast yielding to a vulgar and ostentatious display of wealth.

“ I am actually afraid of meeting my old acquaintance, and it is for this reason you see me play the owl at this late hour ; at which, at

least, I am allowed to have my own way, without being intruded upon by my friends, or pushed aside by the busy multitude, to whom I must for ever remain an unprofitable stranger.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Return Home.—A Passage from the Edinburgh Review, apologetical of American Federalism.—Speculation on the Subject.—Little Reward of Democracy in the United States.—The Higher Classes contending for the Purse.—Consequence of this Policy.—Declaration of an American Reviewer with regard to American Poets — their Reward in Europe.—Falling asleep.—The Nightmare.

“The earth has bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them.”

Macbeth, Act i. Scene 3.

ON my return home, I found it impossible for me to go to sleep. The events of the day were yet fresh upon my mind, and I required some abstraction to set my thoughts to rest, and efface the disagreeable impressions produced by the conversation of the stranger. Undetermined as to the means of escaping from

my own reflections, I searched the books and papers on my writing-table; where, unfortunately for my quiet, I happened to glance my eye on an American republication of the “Edinburgh Review,” and a few scattered numbers of the “Southern Literary Messenger.” I mechanically opened the first, and, as misfortune would have it, found my attention at once riveted by the following passage:—

“Purge the British constitution of its corruptions,” said Adams, “and give to the popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect institution ever devised by the wit of man.”

“Purge it of its corruptions,” replied Hamilton, “and it would become an *impracticable* government: as it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government that ever existed.”

These remarks, I thought, proceeding from the two saints by which the American Whigs still swear on solemn occasions, prove at least Hamilton to have been the abler statesman,

though they are both clearly indicative of the spirit which pervaded some of the leading patriots of the revolution.

Anxious to learn the opinion of a British writer on so interesting a subject, I read on, and was struck with the following good-natured apology for the doctrines and sentiments of the old Federalists.

“The leaning of the Federalists towards monarchy and aristocracy,” says the reviewer, “has probably at all times been a good deal exaggerated by their antagonists. That there is, at the present time, hardly any such feeling, may be easily admitted; and it has probably been wearing out by degrees ever since the revolution, in proportion as men saw that realised without a struggle (!), which many in America, and still more in England, had deemed impossible, — the firm establishment of a republican government over many millions of people, with sufficient power to preserve order at home, and sufficient energy to maintain the relations of peace and war. *But, at the first, no reasonable doubt can be entertained of the fond-*

ness for monarchical institutions which prevailed among the leading Federalists."

The perusal of this passage, after a day spent, as I have described, in the city of New York, naturally gave rise to singular reflections. "What is it," said I to myself, "that the Americans have established without a struggle? And wherein consists the stability of their republican institutions, if it be not in the fact that the people from year to year conquer them anew from the wealthy opposition? And, as regards the predilection for monarchical and aristocratic institutions, who that has observed the higher classes of Americans, at home or abroad, can doubt but that they are at this moment as strong as at the time of Thomas Jefferson?"

The old Federalists have not given up *one* of their former pretensions, — for there is no converting men in politics by argument; but they are probably satisfied that they must *wait for a favourable opportunity* of establishing them: they have become more cautious in their actions and expressions, because they now *fear*

the people over whom they once expected to rule. All that I have been able to see in the United States convinces me that the wealthy classes are in no other country as much opposed to the existing government; and that, consequently, no other government can be considered as less permanently established, or more liable to changes, than that of the United States. And this state of danger the soft speeches of the Whigs try to conceal from the people by directing their attention almost exclusively to the financial concerns of the country. Wealth, in other countries,—as, for instance, in England,—acts as the *vis inertiae* of the state; talent from above, and the wants of the labouring classes from below, acting as motors. In America the case is the reverse: the wealthy classes wishing for a change which the labouring ones resist; and talent, I am sorry to say, acting a subordinate part, ready to serve the cause of either party that promises to reward its exertions.

This, I am aware, is a sad picture of America, but nevertheless a true one; and I appeal

to the history of the last half century, and to the biography of American statesmen, if an impartial one should ever be written, in confirmation of the general correctness of my statement. Exceptions to this rule exist, of course, in every State; but, without any particular predilection in favour of democracy, it is easy to perceive that these mostly occur on the popular side.

Whenever a man of talent or wealth embraces the cause of democracy, he becomes at once the butt of society, and the object of the most unrelenting persecution with all the "respectable" editors, lawyers, bankers, and business men in the large cities. To one democratic paper published in a city, there are generally from ten to twelve, sometimes twenty, Federal or Whig journals; which I take for the best possible proof that talent loves to be rewarded, and in republics, as well as in monarchies, naturally serves those who are best *able* to reward it.

The democrats have not the means of remunerating the services of their public men

in the manner of the Whigs; for, with the exception of a few government offices, with mere pittance for salaries, and the election of senators and members of Congress,—persons “hired at the rate of eight dollars a day,”—all lucrative offices of trust and emolument are in the gift of the opposition, whose patronage, therefore, is a matter of infinitely higher consideration than that of the President and his cabinet.

The little pecuniary reward which the zealous and champions of democracy meet with in the United States, is, indeed, one of the reasons for which they are despised by their aristocratic opponents. “What talents,” argue the latter, “can a man possess who will give up all manner of business, and devote himself exclusively to politics, in order, near the close of his life, to sit down contented with the editorship of a penny paper, a membership of Congress, or an office of from twelve hundred to two thousand dollars a year? Success in life is the best proof of ability; and who that will look upon the respective condition of our

political partisans can for one moment be doubtful as to which of them have the *best side* of the question ? ”

It is for such and similar reasons that they take every opportunity of railing against the increased patronage of the government ; as if the government of the United States were something apart from the people, — a power which the people have to contend with, and against which, therefore, they must direct their concentrated efforts ! And a considerable portion of the people are actually duped in that way ; they imagine that what is taken away from the government is gained by the community, forgetting that the government is of their own choice, and that the men placed at the head of it rise or fall at their beck. They do not seem to be aware that, as long as the government of the United States remains elective, all executive power vested in it increases but the sovereignty of the people, and that the patronage of the government is essentially their own.

On the subject of patronage the aristocratic

press of America is truly eloquent ; that being the point for which it most contends, the lever of its patriotism. What, indeed, would become of the flower of statesmen of the present Whig party, if the government of the country, or the people who elect that government, could reward the advocacy of their cause as princely as the “wealthy and enlightened” opposition?—if *money* were at the command of the public servants, as it is at the disposal of those who manage the great financial concerns of the country? Hence the people are warned against putting the sword and the purse into the same hands. “Let the government have the sword,” say the Whigs, “provided we keep the purse.”

The purse is the point round which the whole system of politics turned ever since the origin of the country. The war for and against a bank did, indeed, agitate the United States before they were quite ushered into existence ; and has continued to throw the elements of state into confusion, and to act in a truly corrosive manner on every true source of national

grandeur. What effect it had on the progress of literature and the arts is exultingly shown in an article of "The Southern Literary Messenger;" a copy of which, as I observed before, I found by accident on my writing-table.

"The intellectual character of our republic," says a writer in that clever periodical, in a paper bearing the title "Scriptural Anthology," "makes rapid advances in improvement. A very few years ago it was seriously argued whether or not the air of America was favourable to the inspirations of genius; now our artists, actors, and poets bid fair to take the lead of their European rivals. If the former fall short in anything,

'We ought to blame the culture, not the soil.'

It is now conceded on all sides that we have the stamina, or, (to speak in a business-like tone,) the *raw material* of the first quality. No doubt but we have had Homers in embryo, many a 'mute inglorious Milton,' and many a Tasso, 'cabined, cribbed, and confined' by oppressive circumstances. But in spite of all those proverbial obstacles, to most of which the

American bard* is particularly liable, a poetical star sometimes gleams above our horizon. Such instances, it must be confessed, are rare; and in what part of the world is the advent of a good poet *not* a rare occurrence? With us but little encouragement is offered for any man to devote his time and talents to this branch of literature; and, without exclusive devotion, we are apt to suppose that excellence in any art or science is but seldom attained. But, with respect to encouragement, matters are beginning to take a change for the better;—in our literary world the golden age has been delayed to the last: poetical speculations, albeit of an airy and immaterial nature, now yield something substantial in the way of profit. Poets begin to have ‘a local habitation,’ not in the gaol or garret; and ‘a name,’ not synonymous with starvation. From being objects of cool regard or warm persecution, they have become quite the lions of the day; *they visit foreign countries, associate with the nobility, and drink tea (or punch) in the serene presence*

* The word “American” is in Italics in the original.

of the royal family. Even at home, the study (!) of poetry has almost dared to compete with the absorbing calculations of compound interest; and many a clerk is ‘condemned to cross his father’s spirit,’ as Chaucer saith, by penning a stanza ‘when he should make out a bill.’ ”

This sort of reasoning, in which I am half inclined to believe the author was serious, together with the fact that the principal poets of America are really obliged to seek “a local habitation and a name” in *Europe*, may be considered as the best proof of the all-absorbing influence of the purse;—an influence which already acts restrictively on genius and talent of the highest order, and will, if it be not counteracted by a more generous system of legislation, and a different spirit diffused *among the people*, constantly absorb the main sources of thought and action, which give to every nation its individual life and character.

But I trust that the good sense of the people, the intelligence pervading the masses, and, above all, the high degree of morality and virtue which distinguishes the American above

all other nations in the world, will be proof against the temptations of a handful of political sceptics; and that the country, blessed with Nature's richest gifts, and selected by Providence for the noblest experiment tried by man, will fulfil its mission,—which is not only the civilization of a new world, but the practical establishment of principles which heretofore have only had an ideal existence.

Thus cogitating, I pulled my night-cap over my head, put out the candle, and fell fast asleep. Agitated as I had been during the whole day, my sleep could not remain undisturbed by dreams. I imagined myself somewhere near the Hudson or the Delaware, in the midst of a large, flourishing city, besieged, stormed, and finally carried by a victorious Western army, whose gallant leader dictated laws written in blood to the affrighted populace. A deputation of “leading citizens,” who had come to offer their riches as a ransom for their lives, he thus apostrophized in a stern and solemn voice:—“Fools that ye were to wish for artificial distinctions! Know that the

origin of every aristocracy is the sword, not the purse, or the Jews would long ago have become the masters of the world ! You have claimed the purse for yourself, and now the sword shall take it !”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENILEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

RETURN TO: CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
198 Main Stacks

LOAN PERIOD	1	2	3
Home Use			
	4	5	6

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS.

Renewals and Recharges may be made 4 days prior to the due date.
Books may be renewed by calling 642-3405.

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW.

SEP 22 2004		



8000789307

